Tennis Wimbledon Championships

Krajicek plays it straight

Stephen Bierley

NOT a seed in sight but root and branch it was Richard Krajicek's final on Sunday. Serving with merciless severity and striking ground strokes of invincible certainty, the 24-year-old Dutchman defeated America's MaliVai Washington in straight — albeit interrupted — sets 6-3, 6-4, 6-3.

When he reflects on his victory, which in the white-hot heat of the winning moment brought him tumbling to his knees with unbridled joy, Krajicek will have cause to remember the name of Austria's Thomas Muster.

Muster, the No 7 seed, pulled out of the tournament a few days before the start and Krajicek was slipped into his place in the draw. This immediately put him on course to meet the reigning champion Pete Sampras and the former champion Michael Stich, and he raised his game magnificently.

Before this Wimbledon Krajicek had never progressed beyond the fourth round but a victory at this stage over the German, coupled with the quarter-final eradication of Sampras, marked him out as the man in the most marvellous form.

Yet in a year where the form book's pages fluttered soggily out of the window, few were prepared to forecast anything. Australia's Jason Stoltenberg stood between the 6ft 5in Krajicek (affectionately known as Crackerjack on the circuit) and the coveted final — his first in a Grand Slam tournament.

Would it be double or drop? Krajicek was the embodiment of coolness throughout the semi-final and again on Sunday. "When you have a serve like that, then you get a break and boom — that's it," said Washington. And it was. Here were aces high, low and every whichway — 14 in the final and more than 100 powered down in all.

This victory was achieved by more than mere service power, however. Krajicek reached the Italian Open final in Rome earlier this year and, although he lost in four sets to Muster, he revealed a range and variety of strokes that augured well for his Wimbledon hopes.

The Dutchman followed this up by reaching the quarter-final of the French Open, where he lost to Yevgeny Kafelnikov, the eventual champion.

Those who have watched Krajicek's career unfold have always believed he should one day do well at Wimbledon, but a run of injuries left him short of victories and confidence. With total fitness came self-belief and, on Sunday, his first Grand Slam title after semi-final failures at the Australian Open in 1992 and at Roland Garros the next year.

Krajicek's win earned him £392,500, although it was something a little different that lit up his eyes before the match began. Wimbledon's first streaker cavorted past both players as they stood at the net and the Dutchman admitted afterwards that her run had helped break the tension. The All England Club was more circumspect. "Whilst we do not wish to condone the practice, it did at least provide some light amusement for our loyal and patient supporters, who have had a trying time during the recent bad weather," read their statement.

Washington, aged 27 and ranked 20th in the world but with only one previous major quarter-final appearance in seven years of trying, saw the writing on the grass as early as the second game when Krajicek broke his serve. "Boring!" came a brief cry as Krajicek pummelled down three successive aces to make the score 5-2. But this was not the aridity of the Sampras-Ivanisevic final of two years ago.

"The trouble is that when you play a guy serving like Richard you can be 40-0 up on his serve and even then he blasts four past you," said the white-haired Pancho Segura, who was regularly taken to the service cleaners by Pancho Gonzales. The great showman was talking during the first of three rain breaks and urging Washington to step in more often.

Washington's game certainly improved sharply during the second set, although Krajicek's serve was threatened only once — and then only briefly. The American was battling a surging tide and was engulfed again in the ninth game of the second set, saving two break points but not the third.

The only element that could have stopped the Dutchman was the weather. Washington managed one break back in the third set but this strangest of Wimbledons ended thankfully on a ringing note of individual triumph.

Roll of honour

Men' Singles: Winner, R Krajicek; runner-up, M Washington

Women's Singles: Winner, S Graf; runner-up, A Sanchez Vicario

Men's Doubles: Winners, T Woodbridge/M Woodforde; runners-up, B Black/G Connell

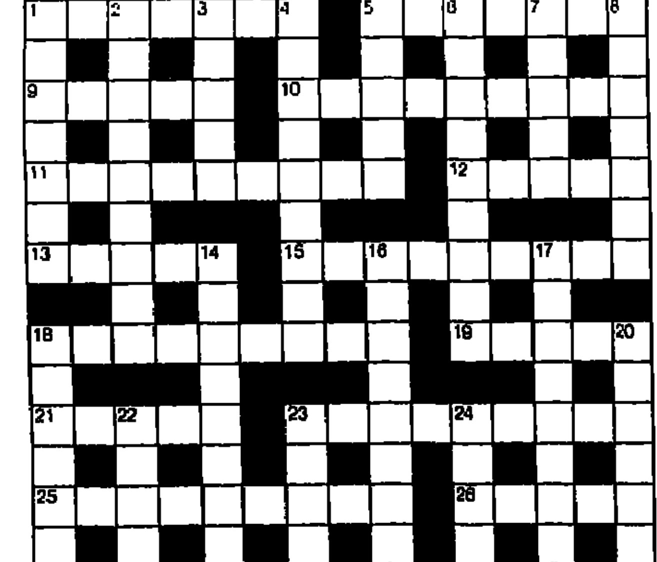
Women's Doubles: Winners, M Hingis/H Sukova; runners-up, M McGrath/L Neiland

Mixed Doubles: Winners, C Suk/H Sukova; runners-up, M Woodforde/L Neiland



Golden moment . . . Richard Krajicek kisses the Wimbledon trophy after crushing MaliVai Washington's challenge PHOTOGRAPH: TOM JENKINS

Cryptic crossword by Crispa



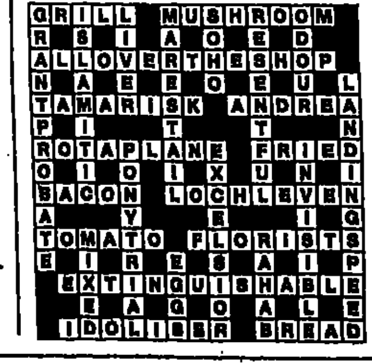
Across

1 Saw show with the right note (7)
5 Fodder for cattle in Alpine meadows? (7)
9 The student's leave of absence from lunch say (5)
10 Speed with which the managers aim to score here (9)
11 Turn work into play (9)
12 Enabled a high-ranking official to find oblivion (6)
13 Wrinkle free and middle-aged! (6)
15 Possibly let assets go to get flat (9)
18 People are not fit to take them (9)
19 This is unusual if not in military service (5)
21 Record set by a female animal (5)
23 A bunch of reporters keen to enlist help? (5,4)
25 Awfully daring — are called to account for it (9)
26 The capital of a couple of hundred big guns (5)
27 Immutable as 8 (7)
28 Diversified sport, that is the answer (7)

Down

1 Head getting in through advocate (7)
2 Having a single manual worker take heed and no mistake! (3-6)
3 Offering some pretext, radioed for additional supplies (5)
4 Game graduate fellow about to make a lot of money (9)
5 A body of seamen captured by the French in Ulster (5)
6 Spanish gentleman having a dance with the queen in company (9)
7 Devious sort — a cook (5)
8 Quite without purpose, like 27 (7)
14 Leaving out the objection (9)
16 America backing the prodigal will hold things up (9)
17 The means of obtaining admission is fascinating (9)
18 Many a fool, over time, creates friction (7)
20 Impress certain points on serious follower (7)
22 A resort of high-fliers (5)
23 Really punishing Nepal trip (5)
24 The rogue will do badly (5)

Last week's solution



Graf in seventh heaven

FROM time to time during Saturday's final thoughts turned to pigs. Not the fat ones that Richard Krajicek, in an appalling moment of political incorrectness, once suggested were rampant in the women's game; rather, the noise these creatures make: the grunt, *writes Stephen Bierley.*

It is perhaps unfair both on women's tennis and pigs to describe the cries certain players emit as grunts, but English is not particularly rich in verbs or adjectives to detail the exhalation of air accompanied by sound.

So it is that Monica Seles has been dubbed a grunter. Thoughts of Seles were to the fore during the women's final because without her return to form the women's game is likely to continue to be dominated by Steffi Graf and Arantxa Sanchez Vicario, who have now met in six of the last 11 grand slam finals.

Sanchez Vicario was visibly upset last month when she lost in three sets to Graf at Roland Garros, having come so close to victory. On Saturday she accepted, without excuse, that Graf had simply been the better player. "Steffi has never played the forehand as good. When she plays me she plays her best, and on this occasion she was so consistent — better than any other match."

The pulverising depth of Graf's forehand, particularly to Sanchez Vicario'sbackhand side, was the dominant theme of this match. The first set took 33 minutes and, when Graf rushed to a 4-0 second-set lead, it appeared that the final would last barely an hour. Snchez Vicario had not played badly but Graf's power and lengthwere pitiless.

When, at 3-0 down, Sanchez Vicario took a bathroom break, Graf (suffering from a heavy cold for which she had received treatment earlier) covered herself in towels. If the Spaniard's interlude was an attempt to break Graf's clamp on the match it had a delayed effect.

Graf held her next serve to love and only then began to display vulnerability. An air shot on a smash led to her being broken for the first timeand she lost her serve again as Snchez Vicario levelled at 5-5.

Graf's respone was immediate. On the first point of the next game Sanchez Vcario fell as she tried to retrieveshe rose slowly and, although not hurt, lost her serve to love. The shadow of her compatriot Migel Indurain, blowing up horibly in the Alps, fell across her.

So Graf servd out for her seventh Wimbldon title. It was her 100th tourament win and 799th singles access. "I don't know how I dot. I just keep on doing it. I don'care." One person who does are is Seles, who remains worldoint No 1.

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The **Guardian** Weekly

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Week ending July 28, 1996

TWA crash 'yields bomb evidence'

…n Katz in New York …nd Reuter

PRELIMINARY tests on a residue found on wreckage fom TWA Flight 800 suggest tat the Boeing 747 which cashed en route to Paris from New York last week was brought dwn by explosives, it was reported on Monday.

Qoting unnamed "well-placed" sources, the CNN television network said investigators testing wreckage close to the baggage hold of the airliner foundtell-tale chemicals typically left by the detonation of an explosive device. The residue was found on the trailing edge of oneof the wings near the baggage compartment.

Meanwhile the ABC network reported investigators as saying privately that the piece of metal recovered had blast and burn marks consistent with an explosive device. It also said investigators have now put the possibility of a missile attack at the top of their shortlist.

The tests on theresidue found on the wreckage were carried out using imprecise field equipment. It has been sent to a forensic laboratory for further tests.

But while officials insisted the results were inconclusive, they are the strongest evidence so far that the 230 passengers and crew who died when the airliner plunged into the Atlantic off Long Island shortly after take-off last week were the victims of foul play.

James Kallstrom, the FBI agent in charge of the anti-terrorism task force investigating the crash, refused to comment on the reports of blast evidence but said: "I think we will know the answer to this sooner rather than later."

A piece of wreckage from the Boeing 747 is towed to land: 230 died in the crash off Long Island PHOTOGRAPH. DANIEL GOODRICH

The apparent breakthrough came hours after hundreds of relatives of the crash victims had gathered on a beach near the disaster scene for a memorial service.

Looking distraught, several of the relatives waded into the sea up to their knees, hugging each other and staring out towards the area nine miles off the coast where Coast Guard cutters and police divers are still hunting for bodies and wreckage.

Families of the victims have become increasingly angry over the slow pace of the recovery effort and the identification of bodies.

By Monday, five days after the crash, divers had still not recovered the plane's "black box" voice and flight data recorders — the key items investigators want as they try to determine whether the jet was destroyed as a result of terrorism, mechanical failure or human error.

Washington Post, page 15

Tutsi leaders make 'deal' on evictions

Chris McGreal in Kigali

THE United Nations has accused the Tutsi-controlled governments of Burundi and Rwanda of collaborating over the *expulsion of thousands of Rwandan* Hutu refugees from camps in Burundi.

As the forced repatriations began, Burundi's army said that more than 300 Tutsi children, women and men had been massacred by Hutu rebels who the military claims are sheltering in refugee camps.

Since Friday last week, Burundi's soldiers have been forcing about 1,000 refugees at a time on to lorries, some commandeered from the UN. They have then been dumped across the border in Rwanda.

Rwandan government officials said the exercise would continue despite protests from the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). A total of 10,900 have arrived in Rwanda since last Friday.

The UN secretary-general, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, citing the massacre in Burundi, urged the Security Council to take immediate action to prevent another catastrophe in Central Africa and to press ahead with plans for a multi-national force.

Efforts by the former Tanzanian president Julius Nyerere to mediate have failed to end the violence, and a plan to deploy a regional peace-keeping force in Burundi is on hold as the government and its neighbours negotiate the terms of military intervention.

The refugee expulsions began from Kibezi camp in the Ngozi area of northern Burundi. All those forced out are Hutus, who fled Rwanda after the anti-Tutsi genocide two years ago.

At the weekend the army moved into a second camp at Ruvomo a few miles away. About 7,000 people had already fled into the hills. The UN said it has been denied access to the camp, where a similar number of people are surrounded by soldiers. All indications showed expulsions would also be conducted from the Magara camp — the biggest with 41,000 refugees.

Burundi insists that the refugees are returning voluntarily. But the UNHCR described the repatriations as illegal expulsions. A spokeswoman, Christiane Berthiaume, accused the governments of working together. "This operation is clearly being carried out in collusion between the authorities of Burundi and Rwanda. It is creating a new crisis," she said.

It is not clear if Burundi's government intends to expel all 85,000 Rwandan refugees on its soil, as it threatened to twice last year, causing tens of thousands of Rwandan Hutus to march towards Tanzania. Then, Burundi allowed the refugees to return after international pressure and Tanzania's refusal to accept them. But this time the Tutsi-dominated army claims the camps are protecting Hutu extremists from both countries and that they are responsible for a series of attacks in Burundi.

The latest victims were several hundred Tutsis murdered last week after they fled Hutu rebel attacks on their homes and headed for a camp at Bungendana in the central Gitega region. Television footage showed dead babies and women among the corpses of many men. Most appeared to have machete, grenade and bullet wounds.

Reuters quoted an anonymous Burundian journalist as saying he counted 304 bodies at the site. Many Burundian journalists are partisan and the number of victims was not independently verified.

Government officials said a mass funeral would take place on Tuesday for the victims. Anti-Hutu feelings rose in the capital, Bujumbura, at the weekend as thousands of Tutsis took to the streets to protest against the massacre.

The military blamed the killings on one of the largest Hutu rebel groups, the Forces for the Defence of Democracy (FDD). The FDD blamed the army.

Whoever was responsible, the attack has caused the violence to intensify: the death rate has doubled since the year's start, with up to 3,000 people killed each month.

About 150,000 people have died in the three years since the conflict began after Burundi's first Hutu president was assassinated by Tutsi soldiers. Most of the victims are unarmed civilians murdered either by Hutu rebels or the mainly Tutsi military.

Kigali diary, page 4

Austria	AS30	Malta	45c
Belgium	BF75	Netherlands	G 4.75
Denmark	DK16	Norway	NK 18
Finland	FM 10	Portugal	E300
France	FF 13	Saudi Arabia	SR 6.50
Germany	DM 4	Spain	P 300
Greece	DR 400	Sweden	SK 19
Italy	L 3,000	Switzerland	SF 3.30

Eurosceptics cheer as minister resigns

Michael White

JOHN MAJOR ruled out concessions on the British Cabinet's European policy this week as Tory in-fighting resumed following Monday's resignation by the Treasury minister David Heathcoat-Amory.

Cabinet loyalists were in despair and many Tory MPs were puzzled that a fastidious colleague, who had remained in the key post of deputy chief whip during the bloody passage of the Maastricht Treaty, should jump ship and blight the Government's latest hope of recovery by calling for outright rejection of British involvement in a single European currency.

Eurosceptics were delighted. "In the short term the Cabinet will dig in," said one. "In the medium term this will help us win." Speculation persisted that other ministers itch to leave the Government as it enters its last, desperate fight for survival.

Mr Major planned to conduct a limited reshuffle on Tuesday. Despite Mr Heathcoat-Amory protesting that he had planned to go quietly in the reshuffle, his resignation was dragged out over four days since it was leaked.

He then twisted the knife with a resignation letter that dismissed the Cabinet's carefully crafted compromises on the single currency as useless in the face of a "relentless drive" towards political union. "This policy is not working," he told Mr Major. He pointedly described the Cabinet's agreement to avoid ruling out membership of a Euro-currency bloc during the 1997-2002 parliament as "an equivocation confusing to the public and disappointing to most of our supporters".

This is the nub of the struggle tearing the Tories apart. Sceptics believe that ruling out a single currency before 2002 would unite their party and help Mr Major beat Tony Blair. Loyalists believe in keeping options open — and in not appeasing Thatcherite fundamentalists.

In his reply to Mr Heathcoat-Amory, Mr Major conceded: "I understand the passions aroused by this issue", but added that it was in Britain's interest to stay at the heart of the debate on planning a single currency, to which France and Germany are committed.

A trail of broken British promises on Hong Kong

WITH LESS than a year to go, I do not know what else can be said about my home town except this: Beijing is going to do whatever it wishes to Hong Kong from July 1, 1997, and no one seems to be able to stop it from messing up the city.

I disagree with your leader (Motherland calls, July 7) saying that the 1984 Sino-British agreement, with an objective of a smooth transition to preserve Hong Kong's freedoms and the rule of law, might have worked if the Beijing massacre had not devastated confidence in Hong Kong and, largely as a result, the last colonial governor had not felt impelled to prompt a more active package of democratic reform.

Even without the Tiananmen Massacre, Hong Kong would still have been doomed by Beijing's heavy-handed political repression. The British government likes the whole world to believe that everything was fine until Tiananmen. Nothing could be further from the truth. After Margaret Thatcher had signed the Joint Declaration sealing the fate of Hong Kong in 1984, Britain kept kowtowing to mainland China. Under the direction of Sir Percy Cradock, the main architect of Britain's betrayal of Hong Kong, Edward Youde and David Wilson, Governor Chris Patten's two predecessors, bowed to Beijing's pressure whenever there was any rift between Beijing and London on Hong Kong. The pro-democracy camp in Hong Kong has always been frustrated by fighting two enemies at the same time: Beijing brutality and London spinelessness.

I remain sceptical of Mr Patten's sincerity towards Hong Kong. As a British politician, Britain's interests, not Hong Kong's, are his only concern. His mission is to ensure the British empire has an "honourable retreat". With his too-little-too-late political reform package, Mr Patten now can shamelessly proclaim to the world that Britain has done all it could to protect Hong Kong. This is nonsense, of course, but good rhetoric for public relations.

Nevertheless, the Patten package was a tiny step heading in the right direction. Mr Patten brought us some fresh air and opened up the system more. The problem of his reform lies in its limited scope and timing. If London had introduced similar programmes more than a decade ago, Hong Kong would have had a chance to establish some "defence mechanisms" against Beijing. Now, Hong Kong will be totally under the brutal regime's mercy when the British retreat next year.

You are absolutely correct, though, to state that the annual press freedom report released by the Hong Kong Journalists Association and Article 19 is worrying. However, self censorship of the media, which started along ago, should raise more concern. Most local news proprietors are businessmen first, second and last, who care about nothing but money. If telling the truth and defending abstract principles such as press freedom is going to upset the future master and hurt their pockets, they will have no hesitation in following the official line.

While I understand your suggestion that we should send our letters and faxes not to Government House in Hong Kong but to the State Council of Beijing from now on, I think we still should address both of them. We should not let London off the hook so easily. It was Britain that sold Hong Kong out and forced us to accept empty promises like "50 years, no change" and "one country, two systems" from Beijing. As Britain has a "moral responsibility" towards Hong Kong at least until the year 2047, 50 years after 1997, repeatedly proclaimed by politicians from Margaret Thatcher and John Major to Chris Patten, we should keep "bothering" the British government for the next half a century.
Kin-ming Liu,
Sai Kung, Hong Kong

Easing South Africa's journey

I AM glad that the president of my native country has been celebrated in Britain. I am, however, much less convinced that there is any real willingness among political leaders or businessmen to give him much help in building the new South Africa.

Throughout the years of white supremacy both major UK parties failed to oppose South Africa in the UN. Pre-Tutu, the English-speaking churches were also complicit in the maintenance of the regime, even though a royal line of individual clergymen (Scott, Reeves, Huddleston) provided an exception. Even the left-wing Inner London Education Authority removed eight teachers from their posts for daring to celebrate Mandela's 70th birthday because he was regarded as a terrorist.

South Africa needs economic aid to build up its infrastructure, especially in education, to combat racial inequality. It has been offered a derisory sum.

The ANC and the South African Communist Party have chosen to rely on private capitalist investment as the engine of change. But, to judge from some of the responses to Mandela's appeal, there is limited enthusiasm for investment in South Africa by British capital.

What is needed is a movement to succeed Anti-Apartheid to demand that Mandela and his colleagues be given the means to create a genuine non-racial society. Without this we shall see simply tired politicians trying to bask in his reflected glory.
(Prof) John Rex,
University of Warwick, Coventry

SARAH BIFFEN (A new chapter for South Africa, June 23) starts off on the right track when she asks: "Why are black South African students having to study Shakespeare and Chaucer?" But then she skirts the real issue of the inherent racism of the canon of "great works" by refining her bold first question into a facile second question: "How will a close knowledge of the Nun's Priest's tale help [black South Africans] find employment?"

Studying Chaucer and Shakespeare gets very few people jobs, whether they are black South Africans, Vietnamese Canadians or even white Britons. The works are not valued for their income-generating potential, but because they afford insight into "the human condition".

The question which must be asked is not why Shakespeare, Dickens, Austen *et al* are studied — the value of their works is obvious. The question should be why equal time is not given to non-Anglo Saxon writers of similar calibre. And this is not a question to be asked just by black South Africans. Unless you are willing to endorse the narrow nationalist or racist view that only Britons can provide meaningful commentary to a British audience, then the need to explode the canon must be felt even in the "green and pleasant land" itself.
Greg Bak,
Dalhousie University,
Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada

Save the World Service

THE BBC World Service is an international asset, a gift from one nation to the world, to be counted alongside peace-keeping forces, vaccination programmes, and refugee quotas. Its precise, restrained style is a model of professionalism. Its independence lends credibility to British democracy. In an era of mass media mergers and shrinking sound bites, it is rare that a broadcaster speaks to the listener's intelligence instead of his wallet. The service's unbiased, conscientious reporting is respected throughout the globe as the nearest possible thing to objective truth. Its independence must not be compromised in any way.
Jonathan Paul Cook,
Odense, Denmark

THANK you for your coverage of John Birt's plans for the World Service. Birt says the World Service must not be regarded as a garden that needs preserving. I heartily agree and believe most people who work here feel likewise. But his proposed changes have frozen us in time and forced a committed and creative workforce to devote their energies to maintaining the status quo.

Since I came to the World Service eight years ago, it has changed continually, never as fast as many of us would have liked, but the rapid developments that happened under John Tusa were later stalled largely by successive cuts to our budget.

We now have pacier, more frequent, more in-depth and, yes, costlier current-affairs programmes. We, too, did rolling programmes during the Gulf war, but with existing staff, working double our normal hours, and more. Now doing special programmes, or "going rolling", is part of the ethos — and it's generally done out of goodwill, not for overtime. There are a lot of things that are different about the World Service that Birt doesn't seem to know. Before his June bombshell, we were preparing for the biggest change yet — splitting the network, with one channel running 24-hours news and current affairs. It was pretty ambitious as there was less, not more, money.

The World Service would welcome a dynamic management that recognised its potential rather than thinking nostalgically of us as some vestige of empire. We have a virtual global monopoly. No station comes close to our reach and reputation — despite the fact that much of our audience has to struggle to hear us on the scratchy short-wave frequencies.

We must have better audibility if we are to compete. But, in the meantime, if Birt is so keen on cost-effectiveness, why not have the World Service supplying current-affairs programmes for BBC Radio 4? We're cheaper, and with the money we could develop the sort of service we've dreamed of providing.
Judy Swallow,
Newshour, BBC World Service,
London

A Guardian web site can be found at http://www.guardian.co.uk /savebush/ for those interested in following the World Service debate

Briefly

WHAT'S new, and why the fuss (Orwell offered a writers' blacklist, July 21)? There is a reference to George Orwell's notebook of suspects in the Penguin edition of my book, Orwell: A Life (1982). That makes clear that at least one other hand was involved, probably, I thought, his friend Arthur Koestler. Koestler and Orwell had both been anti-communist since their experiences in Spain, and both were worried at communist attempts to penetrate the Labour movement and at what they regarded as the excessive softness in fighting back of some socialist intellectuals. If Michael Foot is shocked at his "dealing with the secret services" he is still such a (dear old) softie.
Bernard Crick,
Edinburgh

IT SEEMS some time ago now that a law was passed in Britain forbidding the use of military uniforms (or parts thereof) for political purposes. Does this not apply to the Orange Order in Northern Ireland in their use of sashes?
Brian Thomas,
Paulhan, France

AS REVIEWER Alan Jenkins astutely points out in his review of I May Be Some Time: Ice And The English Imagination (July 7), Francis Spufford got it right: "Imperial arrogance conspiring with anthropology" led most polar explorers to denigrate the Inuit and ignore the wisdom they could have offered.
Penny Williams,
Toronto, Ontario Canada

JONATHAN FREEDLAND'S piece (Battle of the bottle breaks out, June 9) edition should serve as a reminder to all you folks in England how lucky you are that the Puritans left your country and how unlucky for us that they came here and greatly influenced the cultural psychology of the United States. We've been trying to shake off their influence for the past 300 years, but they remain gummed into the American soul, resurfacing in times of trouble like an embarrassing nervous tic.
Filomena Duvy,
Brooklyn, New York, USA

INSTEAD of these obscene pay increases for MPs, I propose a system based on the Tories' much-vaunted market forces. MPs' pay and allowances would be reduced by 5 per cent, plus inflation, per year until such time as the long queues at constituency selection committee doors have been reduced. When a shortage of applicants has been identified, the trend can be reversed: thus would the law of supply and demand prevail.
R J Stubbs,
Eastham, Wirral, Merseyside

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Karadzic promises to step down

Ed Vulliamy

RADOVAN KARADZIC — the Bosnian Serb leader and an international fugitive wanted for genocide and many other war crimes — pledged last week to "withdraw immediately from all political activities", as demanded by the Dayton peace deal which bans war criminals from holding office.

Mr Karadzic's climbdown was announced in Belgrade by the United States' former roving ambassador, Richard Holbrooke, after a night of long and "acrimonious" talks with Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic, Mr Karadzic's patron.

Mr Holbrooke has been trying to salvage the peace agreement he brokered in Dayton by forcing Mr Karadzic to step down before the campaign for September's elections.

Mr Holbrooke's mission was also propelled by an international arrest warrant for Mr Karadzic and the Bosnian Serb army commander, Ratko Mladic, issued by the Hague war crimes tribunal earlier this month. The US state department spokesman, Nicholas Burns, said the Belgrade deal was "unfinished business, that pressure should be kept on [Mr Karadzic] and that our goal remains he should end up in The Hague".

Mr Holbrooke secured Mr Karadzic's signature on a three-section document, ratified by the deputy president, Biljana Plavsic, who now becomes "president", and witnessed by Mr Milosevic.

Sources said that the question of the Brcko corridor — the only territorial matter left unsettled by Dayton — was introduced as a bargaining chip by Mr Milosevic. US sources denied that Brcko had been sold to the Serbs in return for Mr Karadzic's departure.

The first pledge confirms Mr Karadzic's promise to stand down as leader of the "Republika Srpska" statelet, with Miss Plavsic assuming the presidency. Mr Karadzic also "relinquishes all powers associated" with the office.

The second says Mr Karadzic will "withdraw immediately from all political activities", and will not appear on radio, television or other media.

The third, which proved the hardest to achieve, was that he would relinquish the presidency of the nationalist Serbian Democratic Party which he used to seize power.

Crucial matters remain unsolved: his continued liberty in defiance of the Hague warrant, and the likelihood that he will continue to pull political strings. Mr Holbrooke admitted that he had failed to secure the real prize, extradition of the two Serb leaders.

The removal of Mr Karadzic is a personal triumph for Mr Holbrooke, who is seen as the only man the West has with sufficient mettle to match the stubborn ego of Mr Milosevic.

Insiders say that last week's talks lacked the usual mix of camaraderie and diplomacy between the two men. Mr Holbrooke carried President Clinton's authority to warn Mr Milosevic that the US would push for renewed sanctions against Serbia if he did not comply.

The fact that Mr Milosevic was able to marshal the pledge so quickly indicates the authority he holds over the Bosnian Serbs.

This latest, apparently effortless, exercise of authority over Mr Karadzic was keenly noted in the Hague, where investigators are stepping up their inquiries into Mr Milosevic's role in the Bosnian carnage.

The spokesman for the Hague tribunal, Christian Chartier, described Mr Karadzic's climbdown as "the first step on a road which must lead to the Hague".

Hundreds die in Tamil attack on army base

Flora Botsford in Colombo

GOVERNMENT reinforcements were this week trying to fight their way towards a major Sri Lankan army base that Tamil Tiger rebels claimed to have captured after wiping out a 1,200-strong garrison.

Warships were ferrying hundreds of infantrymen to join commandos flown in earlier by helicopters to lift the siege on the Mullaitivu camp, the deputy defence minister, Anuruddha Ratwatte, said.

The two sides have given conflicting casualty reports, but the battle has clearly been one of the deadliest in the 13-year civil war. Sri Lankan military officials have expressed anxiety over the fate of troops at the base, saying there was no sign that they were still there. "The situation is not too good at all," a senior military official conceded.

On Monday, five days after the Tiger assault on the base, Sri Lankan officials privately admitted that it could be the government's most serious military defeat since the Pooneryn debacle in 1993, when 700 soldiers were killed defending a garrison.

There has been no communication with the Mullaitivu base, but the obviously heavy losses have stunned and demoralised the armed forces.

According to reports, the bodies of several hundred soldiers were to be handed over to the Red Cross this week. Logistical problems have hampered efforts to move the dead, Red Cross officials say.

Attempts to fly in reinforcements and land troops by sea have been held up by heavy rebel attacks. Government soldiers have created a beachhead a mile from the base, the military said. But one of their first jobs was to evacuate commandos injured on previous missions to rescue their colleagues at Mullaitivu.

Brigadier Sarath Munasinghe, the government's main military spokesman, said: "Things are progressing, but with no communications we can't confirm that troops are holding on to the camp."

The rebels are claiming a major victory, after 13 years of fighting for an independent Tamil state. Both sides are fighting a war that is as much about propaganda as territory.



Colonel Fazly Laphir, who was killed leading troops to lift the rebel siege, is given a military funeral in Colombo PHOTOGRAPH: DEXTER CRUEZ

ETA steps up resort bombings

Adela Gooch in Madrid

SPANISH police deactivated two bombs at seaside resorts as the Basque separatist group ETA escalated its summer terror campaign at the weekend on the Costa Dorada with the bombing of an airport. The explosion injured 35 people, mostly British.

One bomb defused had been placed in the lavatory of a seaside hotel in Salou. The police evacuated 500 guests, most of them Dutch, and scoured beaches for more devices. A second bomb was found and deactivated in a hotel near Cambrils following a telephone warning.

Many of the 24 British tourists hurt when a bomb went off in a rubbish bin at Reus airport, near Tarragona, were able to fly home on Sunday.

Holidaymakers returned to Manchester to tell of screaming children and panic. Alan Conway, aged 39, from Wigan, said he and his family had just gone through passport control when there was a shattering bang.

"There was smoke everywhere and glass flying, and all around there were kids screaming," he said. "Then everybody just ran to get out of the building. There were children getting lost and separated from their parents."

A Spanish cleaner, Isabel Montiel Lorenzo, aged 46, was nearest to the rubbish bin that concealed the bomb, and was the most seriously hurt.

Spain's interior minister, Jaime Mayor Oreja, who visited the injured, said security in resorts would be stepped up but there were no "miracle measures" to stop terrorism. "We must not give way to panic," he said. "That is precisely what ETA wants."

Mr Mayor Oreja said the attacks were almost certainly the work of a unit that planted small bombs in Andalucia earlier this month.

In a separate incident at the weekend, eight grenades exploded near a civil guard barracks in Guipúzcoa.

Copy-cat terror, page 12

Asean pressed to act on Burma

Nick Cumming-Bruce in Jakarta

SOUTHEAST Asian governments seeking to build closer ties with Burma were this week due to hear the concerns of the European Union and western Pacific rim states over continuing repression in the country.

The determination of Western delegations to air these concerns against the wishes of the host, Indonesia, will inject a note of discord into a six-day series of meetings which so far have celebrated the prospects of Burma joining the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean).

Asean admitted Burma as an observer at the weekend as a first step towards full membership, a process it is expected to complete before the end of the decade.

The Irish foreign minister, Dick Spring, met his Burmese counterpart, Ohn Gyaw, on Monday to convey "strongly" the EU's "deep and serious" concerns over what it sees as the deteriorating political situation.

EU governments have stalled Danish calls for economic sanctions against Burma but officials say Mr Spring would make it clear this week that developments in Burma are seen as "fairly negative" and relations will suffer if they remain so.

The United States secretary of state, Warren Christopher, who arrived in Jakarta on Monday, has also distanced the Clinton administration from calls for sanctions. But he said Washington wants talks to see what steps Asean might be prepared to take "to try to ensure that the regime in Burma does not take additional repressive action and provides more openness for their people".

A number of Western governments are now saying privately that Asean may find its reputation compromised by admitting to full membership a country such as Burma.

But Asean leaders were showing no sign of responding to an appeal from the Burmese pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi for pressure on the ruling junta.

Washington Post, page 15

Clinton bows to EU threats over Cuba

Jonathan Freedland in Washington and John Palmer in Strasbourg

PRESIDENT Clinton bowed to British and European pressure and sought to defuse a threatened trade war last week when he delayed a key anti-Cuba law which could have triggered a deluge of billion-dollar lawsuits against overseas companies with trade links to the island.

White House officials announced the climbdown just hours before a midnight deadline on Tuesday last week by which Mr Clinton had to decide whether to waive or enforce a provision of the Helms-Burton law — which has opened a wide rift between Washington and some of the US's strongest allies.

Under the compromise, Title III of the measure — which would allow lawsuits against foreign corporations deemed to be "trafficking" in Cuban assets taken from US citizens by Fidel Castro's regime — will technically become law, but will not apply for six months.

Earlier last week the European Union threatened retaliatory action, including the seizure of US assets, the denial of visas and work permits to US executives and legal action against Washington through the World Trade Organisation, if the measure was enforced.

US business leaders also lobbied White House officials hard, claiming trade relations in Europe, Canada and Mexico would suffer if Title III was enforced.

Britain and its EU partners gave a cool welcome to Mr Clinton's temporary compromise but said that retaliation was still on the cards. Spain, Germany and Ireland all called the decision a "step in the right direction", while Dick Spring, the Irish foreign minister and president of the EU Council of Ministers, spoke of a "turn-around in European Union/United States relations".

Malcolm Rifkind, the British Foreign Secretary, said he was glad the US had "pulled back from the brink" but regretted the decision not to waive other parts of the law.

Britain and other EU members are disturbed by the growing trend in the US for foreign policy and trade issues to be driven by domestic political lobbies — which become more powerful in an election year — and then forced unilaterally on allies.

"It is not a satisfactory solution," a European Union official said. "On Monday the Helms-Burton Act was not law and on Wednesday it is. Is that supposed to be good news for us?"

Announcing the six-month suspension of the right to sue, the US deputy national security adviser, Sandy Berger, hailed the move as a more effective way to pressurise Fidel Castro. "This uses Title III not as a sledgehammer but as a lever to bring about democracy in Cuba," he said.

Washington Post, page 16

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The exchange is the culmination of months of mediation by a six-man German team headed by a security official, Bernd Schmidbauer. Israel took the unusual step of acknowledging Iran's role in the exchange.

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The nightmares of a Tutsi survivor

KIGALI DIARY
Chris McGreal

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For a woman who showed such caution only minutes before it was a startling and unusual recognition of the divide between the Tutsis who lived through the genocide, and those who returned to Rwanda from exile. It is the "outsiders" who are Rwanda's new élite. Some of the survivors are beginning to wonder if it is not at their expense.

The genocide's victims, and the other tiny proportion of Tutsis who slipped through, are the moral foundation for Rwanda's government. It has no popular legitimacy. The Hutu majority would vote it out in an instant were there to be an election.

But survivors have noted that there are hardly any of their number in the government. Rwanda's post-war civil service is dominated by men and women who grew up or were born in Uganda. Tutsis returned from Burundi are prominent in business, and notorious even among other Tutsis for their gut-level maltreatment of Hutus. The one-time refugees back from Tanzania have often settled into the more sedate lifestyle of farming.

The survivors have not been so lucky. Hutu extremists continue to terrorise and kill. The few Tutsis whose homes are still standing have often not been able to return. Most of the men who organised the genocide are still free.

As her bitterness spills forth, she dares to venture into territory almost no survivor speculates openly about; the origin of their troubles. Yes, there had been decades of routine discrimination interspersed with periodic bursts of anti-Tutsi violence. But then she mentions October, 1990. However bad things were before, that's when they turned really nasty. That's when the "outsiders" invaded to liberate Rwanda's Tutsis. Beatrice said she paid the price.

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The Week

PAKISTAN'S prime minister, Benazir Bhutto, vowed to fight terrorists with an "iron hand" hours after a bomb exploded at Lahore airport, killing up to nine people and wounding more than 50.

AT LEAST 10 people were killed and several wounded when a bomb exploded in a café in the central Algerian garrison town of Blida, according to Moroccan radio.

SIX Indian tourists were shot dead by unidentified gunmen in the troubled state of Jammu and Kashmir, while six others who had been held hostage overnight were released.

THE French prime minister, Alain Juppé, paid a visit to the island of Corsica, bringing a package of tax breaks — which could cost Paris up to $1.35 billion over five years — coupled with demands for a crackdown on crime.

A COURT in Rome sentenced Germano Maccari to life imprisonment for the kidnapping and murder in 1978 of Italy's former prime minister Aldo Moro.

RUSSIAN troops backed by planes and artillery continued their assault on the southern Chechen village of Borzoi. The attack breaches a ceasefire and the Russian parliament's call last week for an end to the violence.

THE Australian prime minister, John Howard, won national agreement for tough new gun laws after three state governments dropped their objections in the face of a threat to hold a national referendum on the issue.

THE United Nations is to get a team of military and civilian experts capable of setting up a field headquarters within hours of a Security Council decision to intervene in a crisis.

PRESIDENT Haydar Aliyev of Azerbaijan has sacked his prime minister, Faud Guliyev, two cabinet members and other senior members of the government in a shake-up intended to revitalise the wrecked economy.

PAUL TOUVIER, the first Frenchman to be tried for crimes against humanity, has died of prostate cancer in a prison hospital near Paris at the age of 81. He headed the Milice, the pro-Nazi French militia, during the second world war.

WOMEN have been arrested, held incommunicado for weeks and threatened by authorities in Bahrain in a crackdown on dissent, according to the human rights group Amnesty International.

ANC's liberal reforms upset South Africans

David Beresford in Johannesburg

TWO SISTERS, aged 13 and 18, earlier this month killed a 55-year-old woman said to be a witch. They took her into a field in South Africa's Northern Province, poured petrol over her and burnt her alive. The incident was — for South Africa at least — unexceptional, but for one detail: the woman was their mother.

It is easy to forget that South Africa is, at base, an intensely superstitious, religious and conservative society. Easy, because the country is fast establishing itself, in liberal terms, as one of the world's most progressive.

The latest example of progressive law-making is draft legislation on abortion. The Termination of Pregnancy Bill allows for abortion on demand up to 12 weeks. In "exceptional" circumstances it can be carried out legally up to 20 weeks after conception. Parental approval in the case of juvenile girls is specifically excluded and the legislation makes it an offence to obstruct anyone from obtaining an abortion, though there is protection for health workers refusing on grounds of conscience to take part in the operation.

Outside parliament, opposition to abortion on demand is more marked — particularly, it seems, in the African National Congress's own constituency. One recent survey suggests 79 per cent of the ANC's followers are opposed to abortion on demand, compared with 73 per cent in the case of the National Party, which is leading the anti-abortion campaign in parliament.

Abortion is not the only area in which the ANC leadership is out of touch with its electorate — or, as progressives would see it, in advance of it. In the midst of one of the worst crimes waves in the world, the ANC has forced through constitutional clauses that in effect outlaw capital, as well as corporal, punishment.

Gay rights is another area in which the ANC is taking a progressive stance. Homosexuality is regarded as an abomination in tribal society, but South Africa is leading the world in its protection of gays. It is believed to be the only country that offers an entrenched protection for homosexuals in its bill of rights, through a clause outlawing discrimination on grounds of "sexual orientation".

The influential gay rights lobby has made a tactical decision to hold back pressing for legal recognition of same-sex marriages, for fear of stirring up homophobic sentiment.

Unlike abortion, or capital punishment, the ANC enjoys support for its stand on gay rights from most other parties, including the ultra-conservative Nationalists.

The one exception is the African Christian Democratic Party (ACDP), which indulges in homophobic rhetoric. The party has only two MPs in the 400-strong national assembly, but was founded during the apartheid era on an initiative by South African military intelligence in an attempt to give expression to what it saw as religious fervour in a conservative black community. As such, the ACDP's antagonism towards gays probably reflects sentiment in the black community.

The sympathy shown to the gay cause by the other parties seems to reflect a post-apartheid backlash against racial prejudice, which has made discrimination of all kinds politically unfashionable. Similarly, extremes of censorship experienced during the apartheid years and abuses of capital punishment (South Africa used to have the highest execution rate in the world, hanging prisoners in batches) has seemingly sent those pendulums swinging in the opposite direction in the wake of liberation.

Macao shows Hong Kong the way to go

Andrew Higgins in Hong Kong

GOVERNOR João Ferreira do Amaral has vanished. He disappeared into packing crates along with his bronze horse and, after a long journey home by sea, now languishes in a Lisbon warehouse.

In place of the pedestal from which he dominated Europe's first and — when Britain hands over Hong Kong next year — last outpost on China's coast, the ventilation shaft of an underground car park now belches.

With Do Amaral out of the way, there is no longer any confusion about who really runs Macao, still nominally under Portuguese rule until December 1999 but already firmly in the grip of other powers.

Responsible for expelling Beijing's tax collectors from Macao 150 years ago, Do Amaral was deported after complaints that his statue represented an unacceptable relic of an expired empire — the final cut for a man who lost his arm and then his head in 19th century skirmishes with China.

Looming today over the seafront *praca* are Macao's real masters. On one side shimmers the mirrored glass of Banco da China, a 34-storey icon of China's communist plutocracy. Across the road beckon the lights of Casino Lisboa, the centre of Macao's high-stake, low-life gambling industry.

"The way we came here was completely different from the way the British came to Hong Kong — Portugal never had an Opium War," said the government secretary, Antonio Salavessa da Costa. "When you live with China for 500 years, you learn how to get on."

In a tiny territory with only 424,000 people, no source of food or water other than China and less than 2 per cent of the size of Hong Kong, getting on generally means giving up.

Portugal has tried twice to hand Macao back to China, first during riots in 1966 ignited by the Cultural Revolution, then again after its own revolution in 1974. China declined, but did accept Lisbon's offer to redefine Macao as "Chinese territory under Portuguese administration" instead of a colony.

Portugal has studiously avoided the clashes that have made Britain's final year of colonial rule in Hong Kong so noisy and jittery. While China treats the Hong Kong governor Chris Patten like a leper, it embraces the governor of Macao, General Rocha Vieria, as a trusted friend.

Local businessmen are delighted. Eric Yeung, a toy manufacturer and economic adviser to Mr Vieria, explains the removal of statues disliked by Beijing as a sensible recognition of the inevitable: "How would you like to see Queen Victoria melted down in a big pot? It is better to take such things away now rather than wait for someone to do it for you later on."

Portugal's determination to "get on" has a more ominous side. Late last year, a Chinese court imposed a 16-year sentence on James Peng, an Australian-Chinese businessman seized from a Macao hotel by local police and then bundled across the border into the hands of the Chinese security forces.

Antonio Marques Baptista, head of Macao's judicial police, stoutly defends a snap extradition condemned by the human rights organisation Asia Watch as a kidnapping. "This case has been closed — no abnormality was found," he said.

In many ways, the handover has already happened, although not a single ethnic Chinese holds a senior post in the civil service or judiciary — a far cry from Hong Kong, where every policy secretary is now Chinese. However, the absence of an experienced, politically savvy cadre of local administrators seems to suit Beijing.

"The government here will be very weak after 1999," warns Ng Kuok-cheong, a Catholic social worker and lone voice of robust dissent in a legislature in which eight of 23 seats are directly elected. "This means the influence of China's cadres will be very strong."

Beijing grumbles occasionally about the tenacious grip of Portuguese and mixed-blood Macanese in the civil service, but also knows that real power in Macao lies elsewhere, in the hands of a business élite.

The local press is firmly under China's control. The Macao Daily News, which has 80 per cent of the market, takes its cue from the Xinhua News Agency, China's *de facto* embassy.

"In Hong Kong there is a pluralistic, modern society," said Mr Ng. "In Macao, we have a civil society controlled entirely by the pro-China camp."

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The Week

PAKISTAN'S prime minister, Benazir Bhutto, vowed to fight terrorists with an "iron hand" hours after a bomb exploded at Lahore airport, killing up to nine people and wounding more than 50.

AT LEAST 10 people were killed and several wounded when a bomb exploded in a café in the central Algerian garrison town of Blida, according to Moroccan radio.

SIX Indian tourists were shot dead by unidentified gunmen in the troubled state of Jammu and Kashmir, while six others who had been held hostage overnight were released.

THE French prime minister, Alain Juppé, paid a visit to the island of Corsica, bringing a package of tax breaks — which could cost Paris up to $1.35 billion over five years — coupled with demands for a crackdown on crime.

A COURT in Rome sentenced Germano Maccari to life imprisonment for the kidnapping and murder in 1978 of Italy's former prime minister Aldo Moro.

RUSSIAN troops backed by planes and artillery continued their assault on the southern Chechen village of Borzoi. The attack breaches a ceasefire and the Russian parliament's call last week for an end to the violence.

T*HE Australian prime minis*ter, John Howard, won national agreement for tough new gun laws after three state governments dropped their objections in the face of a threat to hold a national referendum on the issue.

THE United Nations is to get a team of military and civilian experts capable of setting up a field headquarters within hours of a Security Council decision to intervene in a crisis.

PRESIDENT Haydar Aliyev of Azerbaijan has sacked his prime minister, Faud Guliyev, two cabinet members and other senior members of the government in a shake-up intended to revitalise the wrecked economy.

PAUL TOUVIER, the first Frenchman to be tried for crimes against humanity, has died of prostate cancer in a prison hospital near Paris at the age of 81. He headed the Milice, the pro-Nazi French militia, during the second world war.

WOMEN have been arrested, held incommunicado for weeks and threatened by authorities in Bahrain in a crackdown on dissent, according to the human rights group Amnesty International.

ANC's liberal reforms upset South Africans

David Beresford in Johannesburg

TWO SISTERS, aged 13 and 18, earlier this month killed a 55-year-old woman said to be a witch. They took her into a field in South Africa's Northern Province, poured petrol over her and burnt her alive. The incident was — for South Africa at least — unexceptional, but for one detail: the woman was their mother.

It is easy to forget that South Africa is, at base, an intensely superstitious, religious and conservative society. Easy, because the country is fast establishing itself, in liberal terms, as one of the world's most progressive.

The latest example of progressive law-making is draft legislation on abortion. The Termination of Pregnancy Bill allows for abortion on demand up to 12 weeks. In "exceptional" circumstances it can be carried out legally up to 20 weeks after conception. Parental approval in the case of juvenile girls is specifically excluded and the legislation makes it an offence to obstruct anyone from obtaining an abortion, though there is protection for health workers refusing on grounds of conscience to take part in the operation.

Outside parliament, opposition to abortion on demand is more marked — particularly, it seems, in the African National Congress's own constituency. One recent survey suggests 79 per cent of the ANC's followers are opposed to abortion on demand, compared with 73 per cent in the case of the National Party, which is leading the anti-abortion campaign in parliament.

Abortion is not the only area in which the ANC leadership is out of touch with its electorate — or, as progressives would see it, in advance of it. In the midst of one of the worst crimes waves in the world, the ANC has forced through constitutional clauses that in effect outlaw capital, as well as corporal, punishment.

Gay rights is another area in which the ANC is taking a progressive stance. Homosexuality is regarded as an abomination in tribal society, but South Africa is lending the world in its protection of gays. It is believed to be the only country that offers an entrenched protection for homosexuals in its bill of rights, through a clause outlawing discrimination on grounds of "sexual orientation".

The influential gay rights lobby has made a tactical decision to hold back pressing for legal recognition of same-sex marriages, for fear of stirring up homophobic sentiment.

Unlike abortion, or capital punishment, the ANC enjoys support for its stand on gay rights from most other parties, including the ultra-conservative Nationalists.

The one exception is the African Christian Democratic Party (ACDP), which indulges in homophobic rhetoric. The party has only two MPs in the 400-strong national assembly, but was founded during the apartheid era on an initiative by South African military intelligence in an attempt to give expression to what it saw as religious fervour in a conservative black community. As such, the ACDP's antagonism towards gays probably reflects sentiment in the black community.

The sympathy shown to the gay cause by the other parties seems to reflect a post-apartheid backlash against racial prejudice, which has made discrimination of all kinds politically unfashionable. Similarly, extremes of censorship experienced during the apartheid years and abuses of capital punishment (South Africa used to have the highest execution rate in the world, hanging prisoners in batches) has seemingly sent those pendulums swinging in the opposite direction in the wake of liberation.

Macao shows Hong Kong the way to go

Andrew Higgins in Hong Kong

GOVERNOR João Ferreira do Amaral has vanished. He disappeared into packing crates along with his bronze horse and, after a long journey home by sea, now languishes in a Lisbon warehouse.

In place of the pedestal from which he dominated Europe's first and — when Britain hands over Hong Kong next year — last outpost on China's coast, the ventilation shaft of an underground car park now belches.

With Do Amaral out of the way, there is no longer any confusion about who really runs Macao, still nominally under Portuguese rule until December 1999 but already firmly in the grip of other powers.

Responsible for expelling Beijing's tax collectors from Macao 150 years ago, Do Amaral was deported after complaints that his statue represented an unacceptable relic of an expired empire — the final cut for a man who lost his arm and then his head in 19th century skirmishes with China.

Looming today over the seafront *praca* are Macao's real masters. On one side shimmers the mirrored glass of Banco da China, a 34-storey icon of China's communist plutocracy. Across the road beckon the lights of Casino Lisboa, the centre of Macao's high-stake, low-life gambling industry.

"The way we came here was completely different from the way the British came to Hong Kong — Portugal never had an Opium War," said the government secretary, Antonio Salavessa da Costa. "When you live with China for 500 years, you learn how to get on."

In a tiny territory with only 424,000 people, no source of food or water other than China and less than 2 per cent of the size of Hong Kong, getting on generally means giving up.

Portugal has tried twice to hand Macao back to China, first during riots in 1966 ignited by the Cultural Revolution, then again after its own revolution in 1974. China declined, but did accept Lisbon's offer to redefine Macao as "Chinese territory under Portuguese administration" instead of a colony.

Portugal has studiously avoided the clashes that have made Britain's final year of colonial rule in Hong Kong so noisy and jittery. While China treats the Hong Kong governor Chris Patten like a leper, it embraces the governor of Macao, General Rocha Vieria, as a trusted friend.

Local businessmen are delighted. Eric Yeung, a toy manufacturer and economic adviser to Mr Vierin, explains the removal of statues disliked by Beijing as a sensible recognition of the inevitable: "How would you like to see Queen Victoria melted down in a big pot? It is better to take such things away now rather than wait for someone to do it for you later on."

Portugal's determination to "get on" has a more ominous side. Late last year, a Chinese court imposed a 16-year sentence on James Peng, an Australian-Chinese businessman seized from a Macao hotel by local police and then bundled across the border into the hands of the Chinese security forces.

Antonio Marques Baptista, head of Macao's judicial police, stoutly defends a snap extradition condemned by the human rights organisation Asia Watch as a kidnapping. "This case has been closed — no abnormality was found," he said.

In many ways, the handover has already happened, although not a single ethnic Chinese holds a senior post in the civil service or judiciary — a far cry from Hong Kong, where every policy secretary is now Chinese. However, the absence of an experienced, politically savvy cadre of local administrators seems to suit Beijing.

"The government here will be very weak after 1999," warns Ng Kuok-cheong, a Catholic social worker and lone voice of robust dissent in a legislature in which eight of 23 seats are directly elected. "This means the influence of China's cadres will be very strong."

Beijing grumbles occasionally about the tenacious grip of Portuguese and mixed-blood Macanese in the civil service, but also knows that real power in Macao lies elsewhere, in the hands of a business élite.

The local press is firmly under China's control. The Macao Daily News, which has 80 per cent of the market, takes its cue from the Xinhua News Agency, China's *de facto* embassy.

"In Hong Kong there is a pluralistic, modern society," said Mr Ng. "In Macao, we have a civil society controlled entirely by the pro-China camp."

Good women make their presence felt



The US this week

Martin Walker

BOB DOLE was 73 on Monday, and his wife Elizabeth turned 60 four days later. And for once they were able to spend the time together. Family values count in the new Republican party. Witness Dole's choice for his keynote speaker at the Republican convention next month.

Known as the Madonna of the right, or the Supermom of Staten Island, Susan Molinari is 38 and has a two-month-old daughter. She is a congresswoman from New York, where she represents her father's old political base of Staten Island, the smallest of New York's five boroughs. She is as tough as nails, a veteran and survivor of some of the meanest politics outside the funeral procession for Joseph Stalin.

Republicans should never win an election in liberal New York, but right now the state has a Republican governor, the city has a Republican mayor, and the dreadful Alfonse D'Amato is one of its two senators. The mayor hates the governor and the senator, which is one reason why New Yorkers like him, and he may well endorse Bill Clinton for the presidency, which is another. Molinari not only survives in this snake pit, but mayor, governor and senator all have one thing in common — they all like her. She is married to another Republican congressman from New York.

Molinari votes like a New York liberal. She supported President Clinton's ban on assault weapons and she voted for his family leave bill. She supports abortion rights. That apart, she is steadfastly loyal to the party, and describes herself as "100 per cent for Newt Gingrich, 100 per cent for Bob Dole".

She is representative of the professional women and mothers who have been deserting the Republican party in droves over the abortion issue. Nationwide, Clinton now leads Dole by more than 30 percentage points among women, and the Republicans have to claw this back or they will lose their majorities in House and Senate. As a result, liberal Republicans professed themselves very pleased with Dole's choice of Molinari.

"It is outreach. It is big tent. It is woman in a key position. It's going to help the gender gap," said Senator Arlen Specter of Pennsylvania, who tried to campaign for the presidential nomination as the pro-choice man but was left for dead long before the Iowa caucuses.

Senator Specter was not speaking a foreign language. "Outreach" is fashionable political consultant-speak for reaching out to a neglected section of the party. "Big tent" is more consultant-speak, from the late and lamented first of the breed, Lee Atwater, who always tried to defuse the abortion wars by saying that the party was "a big tent" with lots of room for all sorts of folk to shelter within. Gender gap refers to the fact that more women tend to vote Democratic than men. Under the 19th century voting rules, with blacks and women barred from the polls, George Bush would be president today.

But I digress. Retired general Colin Powell being otherwise engaged, Molinari will be the star of the first night of the San Diego spectacular. The second night is reserved for the mystery guest, Dole's choice as vice-president, and the third night for Dole himself.

Once they had worked this out, and got over their pleasure at Molinari's appointment, the pro-choice women in the Republican party realised with a sinking feeling that Molinari was something of a sop. Dole would not impose pro-choice Republicans on the religious right two evenings in a row. That meant his vice-presidential choice would be anti-abortion, probably male, and politically on the right.

The party's senior women, such as New Jersey's governor, Christine Todd Whitman, Texas Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison and the former Labor secretary, Lynn Martin, each of whom entertained hopes of being Dole's vice-presidential choice, are looking downcast. Their personal disappointment is understandable, though it may still be premature. But if their concern is for their sex, they should take heart. One important feature of the Dole campaign is what it means for women.

Put this another way: the Dole-Clinton match may look pretty tedious just now, but wait until the elections get down to a one-on-one between Sister Frigidaire and Sugar Lips. Rarely can two nicknames have been coined with more precision. Hillary Rodham Clinton's high school classmates bestowed the first one, for the intense young woman they thought might well end up as a nun. Elizabeth Hanford Dole's colleagues on the White House staffs of both Lyndon Johnson and Richard Nixon dreamed up the second, for the Southern Belle with a voice like melting molasses and a mind like a steel trap.



Elizabeth Dole, like Hillary Clinton, is a professional and powerful woman in her own right PHOTOGRAPH: SCOTT STEWART

Some day, even if we do not get the First Ladies' debate that the League of Women Voters is now weighing up, we shall probably look back at this election and say it was not about the men at all. The real significance could lie in the fact that White House women have finally crossed the *hausfrau* hurdle. It is a safe bet that every First Lady in future is going to be a professional and powerful woman, with her own career. And that will just be the transition phase until the first woman is elected president. Barbara Bush, that US version of the Queen Mum, already looks like the end of an era, the last of the First Ladies to be content with being a wife and mother, and political helpmate.

Just look at the alternatives to Elizabeth Dole. If her husband had not won the Republican nomination, the other candidates would have brought some dynamic women in their wake. Lamar Alexander's wife, Honey, is an academic and businesswoman, who helped run Tennessee's Planned Parenthood clinics in her spare time.

Pat Buchanan's wife, Shelley, walked a dutiful two steps behind him in public. In fact, Shelley runs the family firm of Buchanan Enterprises Incorporated. And along with the family firm came Bay Buchanan, Pat's sister, forgiven for her apostasy in converting to the Mormon faith. Bay was Pat's campaign manager, and President Reagan's Treasurer of the United States. She would have been the toughest White House chief of staff of all time, while single-handedly raising her sons.

The kind of person with the ambition and the determination to run for the presidency is the kind of person who will want a spouse of similar skills and passions.

WE SHOULD long since have stopped treating Hillary Clinton as some exotic feminist pioneer. She is close to being typical of women of her age and education, and one of the most interesting questions about her is the way she became a scapegoat for her husband. A ridiculously high proportion of the Clinton presidency's woes can be blamed on the widespread discomfort with her role. This was cunningly exploited by Republicans, who were able to present this intelligent and striking woman as a threat rather than an opportunity. She certainly provided them with enough ammunition, from the political disasters that befell her health reform plan to the Arkansas scandals that bubbled up from her Rose law firm partners, her billing records and her cattle futures investments.

One of the more interesting comments on Hillary's travails came from Elizabeth Dole, who suggested the real mistake was to try carving out a political role from her inadequate power base as a wife, rather than on her own merits, through election or appointment to the cabinet.

"I don't think she set a precedent. I don't think each First Lady coming after her has to do what she has done. I wouldn't. I wouldn't have taken on 7 per cent of the gross national product," Mrs Dole says of Mrs Clinton's health reform venture. "You're not elected, you are not confirmed by the Senate, and you have got one of the most volatile, high-visibility issues."

These two women have made entirely opposite political journeys. Mrs Clinton started off as a Goldwater Girl in 1964, campaigning for the most conservative presidential candidate for a generation. She then moved far, far to the left. Elizabeth started as a devout Democrat from North Carolina, in days when Southerners still considered Republicans to be the direct descendants of the Yankees who burned their way through the old Confederacy.

She was a debutante when this still meant a great deal in the white gloves and cotillion balls society of the South. Her mother was a Daughter of the American Revolution, which meant she could trace her ancestry directly to one of George Washington's comrades-in-arms against the British crown. As the first civil rights battles of the 1950s got under way, and the Supreme Court declared that racial segregation in schools was wrong, she went to Duke, probably the best university in the South. And in 1959, she came across to Britain for a year at Oxford. She then became one of the handful of women of the day to go to Harvard Law School.

Elizabeth Hanford went straight from graduation to the White House, working for the consumer advocate Betty Furness, and then managed to stay in post after Nixon won in 1968 and filled the White House with Republicans. She changed her voting registration from Democratic to Independent, and wangled herself a presidential nomination to be a federal trade commissioner. She only became a Republican when she married Bob Dole in 1975.

Ronald Reagan put her into the cabinet as transportation secretary. Bush kept her in the cabinet as labor secretary, before she left to run one of the biggest organisations in the country, the American Red Cross with its $1.8 billion budget and 30,000 employees. She has said that she wants to go back to the job after the campaign, even if her husband is president. And for the conventional functions of the First Lady, she notes, "there is an adequate provision for staff".

So if Dole wins, he is likely to be just as lonely in the White House as he was in the Senate, with a wife whose career required that their 20th wedding anniversary last December be spent in hotel suites some 2,000 miles apart.

Poor old Dole. He seems to have ended up with Sister Frigidaire. Compare that with Hillary's accounts of stealing out with Bill for romantic midnight dips in the White House pool. But no. Perish the thought. Hillary as the Madonna of Little Rock, one might just swallow. But not even at her most coy could we ever think of her as Sugar Lips.

Nixon reviled Hillary Clinton as 'ice-cold'

RICHARD NIXON considered Bill Clinton "a coward and a fraud" but was flattered when the younger man sought his advice and ultimately became an improbable confidant of the current president, according to a new book, *writes Ian Katz in New York*.

Nixon advised President Clinton on policy towards Russia, China and Bosnia and reassured him that his daily White House routine was not that different from his own, claims the book by Monica Crowley, Nixon's foreign policy assistant.

But the disgraced former president reviled Hillary Clinton, who served on the committee that sought to impeach him during the Watergate affair, calling her an "ice-cold . . . piece of work" who stayed with her philandering husband because she craved the power of the White House.

In an adaptation of the book Nixon Off The Record published by the New Yorker this week, Ms Crowley documents the unlikely relationship between the two presidents — separated by age, ideology and background — based on notes of her conversations with Nixon during the last four years of his life.

She claims he predicted that Mr Clinton would not be damaged by revelations during the 1992 campaign that he had committed adultery. "He seems too slippery to have anything like this stick," he told her.

But Nixon was incensed at the idea that a Vietnam draft dodger might become president. "He was no conscientious objector; he was a selfish, spoiled brat. He made my job harder and he sent God knows how many men to their deaths in his place." If Mr Clinton was elected, the former president told Ms Crowley, "I will know that this country has finally gone to hell."

Later, when Nixon heard that President Clinton was to speak at the new Vietnam Veterans Memorial, he was driven close to apoplexy: "Clinton! That makes me want to puke! His demonstrations prolonged the war."

But the former president's animosity towards Clinton abated when he called the president on March 2, 1993 following a visit by Nixon to Russia.

The older man was impressed by Clinton's respectful tone. The president asked Nixon's advice on how to deal with Boris Yeltsin and fretted that his sweeping defence cuts might be too deep.

Vietnam gets tough on drug traffickers

Nick Cumming-Bruce in Ho Chi Minh City

ALMOST nobody noticed when Vietnamese security men escorted Woong Chi Sinh from a Ho Chi Minh City jail to a shooting range in the suburb of Thu Duc. A firing squad unleashed a volley of shots and then — in line with official procedure — one of the officers stepped forward to put a single bullet in his head to ensure he was dead.

Woong, a Hong Kong Briton, was shot in June last year for smuggling 5kg of heroin, becoming the first foreigner to be executed in post-war Vietnam. He will not be the last.

Two more Hong Kong men may follow in his footsteps. Ho Kam Weng, aged 34, and Kong Chong Sam, aged 36, were seized at Ho Chi Minh City's airport in March carrying false papers and, according to customs officers, 18kg of heroin.

A decade after Vietnam's communist leaders embarked on reforms and ended the country's cold war isolation, they are grappling with a surge in drug trafficking. Western experts believe the country is being considered as a transit route by the region's drug cartels and gangsters in the Vietnamese communities of Australia, the United States and Canada.

Vietnam's proximity to the heroin producers of northern Burma and its long land borders with Laos and Cambodia make it accessible for traffickers. A long coastline adds to its allure.

In the first three months of this year the authorities arrested 290 traffickers, seizing more than 32kg of heroin — as much as was reported seized in the whole of 1994 — and 171kg of opium. But diplomats have no doubt they are catching only minor players.

Those caught can expect little mercy. Like Singapore and Malaysia, Vietnam executes traffickers carrying more than a specified quantity of drugs. But unlike their partners in the Association of South-east Asian Nations (Asean), Hanoi does nothing to advertise its draconian penalties.

Vietnam's penal code allows courts to impose sentences ranging from 12 years' imprisonment to death for those caught with more than 3kg of opium. Perhaps prompted by the spectacle of rampant drug abuse and a roaring trade across the northern border in China, the Vietnamese authorities appear to be enforcing the death penalty more often.

At least seven people were sentenced to death last year and another two in early 1996. Several of these were at first sentenced to life imprisonment but had the penalty raised to death by a higher tribunal.

Vietnam's concern is not just with the international drugs trade. The country has about 200,000 known addicts, most supplied with opium or its derivatives from the mountains and the tribal areas on the north-western border with Laos.

US and EU seek curb on gas emissions

Paul Brown in Geneva

MINISTERS from more than 140 countries bound the industrialised world to legally enforceable cuts in greenhouse gas emissions last week, amid fierce objections from 15 oil- and coal-producing countries.

The United States and the European Union forced through a ministerial statement that committed the OECD group of industrialised countries to adopting legally binding limits, targets and timetables to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from 2000.

Russia sided with Saudi Arabia and Opec countries against the deal, as it threatened their income from fossil fuel sales. Australia was the only industrial country that refused to accept the declaration, instantly making itself an international pariah before the hundreds of environmental groups present.

The insistence on legally binding targets adds a new dimension to the issue. Current agreements to hold carbon dioxide emissions to 1990 levels until 2000 are binding in honour only. The US is considering the possibility of agreements being enforced by making offenders appear before the International Court of Justice, and perhaps employing trade sanctions against them.

The statement, which will be known as the "Geneva Declaration", was welcomed by Ghana's environment minister, Sam Yalley, who said: "This is a subject of life and death. We are not talking about power politics or economic might, it is about the weather which is being destroyed."

However, Saudi Arabia's Abdulbar al-Gain, head of the environmental department of his country's ministry of defence and civil aviation, said the document had made only "selective use" of a major report by 2,500 scientists and experts who found human activity was responsible for much global warming, "with the result that the declaration is biased and misleading".

Despite the obvious delight of the majority of the delegates, there is no hint yet of what the targets and timetables for cutting emissions will be after 2000. The details of the agreement will have to be hammered out during the next year, in time to be finalised at the meeting of the parties in Kyoto, Japan, in December 1997.

The Alliance of Small Island States (Aosis), 35 nations that are threatened with being overwhelmed by rises in sea levels, is hoping for 20 per cent cuts by 2005. A politically more realistic figure is a 5 to 10 per cent cut by 2010, and another, more ambitious, target for 2020 — an idea put forward by John Gummer, the British Environment Secretary.

Another important feature of last week's declaration was the endorsement of the science of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. In particular, the ministers noted that in order to stabilise atmospheric concentrations of carbon dioxide at double pre-industrial levels, global emissions would have to be cut to half the current levels. Even if this was achieved, temperatures would still rise by 2C by the end of the next century and sea levels would rise by half a metre.

The United States' sudden switch in policy has left the united front of its big corporations in tatters. Charles Linderman of the Edison Electric Institute, which represents 600 US electricity producers, refused to endorse the statement by the Global Climate Coalition, an energy lobbying group, that the declaration "would eliminate millions of American jobs, reduce America's ability to compete and force Americans into second-class lifestyles".

He said: "We sell electricity, we do not care where it comes from. The power lines do not know the difference if it comes from coal, a windmill or a solar cell. We are with the future, not the past, we know you cannot go back to the old days."

Tough political decisions will now have to be made in industrial countries. Each nation must examine policy on energy, transport, industry, agriculture, forestry and waste management, including the implementation of taxes to cut greenhouse emissions. For the US and Japan, both of which are expected to exceed their existing stabilisation targets, the political decisions promise to be harder than for Britain.

● The Chinese president, Jiang Zemin, has criticised the "environmental diplomacy" of some developed countries, saying they use it to interfere in other countries' business, the state-run Xinhua news agency reported last week.

Western diplomats believe he was referring to the US Export and Import Bank's decision to deny financing of exports to China's huge Three Gorges Dam project on environmental grounds.

'Anonymous' shows his true colours

Ian Katz in New York

ONE of the most hotly debated — and lucrative — literary mysteries of modern times was finally resolved last week when the Newsweek political columnist Joe Klein admitted that he wrote Primary Colours, the wildly successful *roman-a-clef* about the 1992 Clinton campaign.

Mr Klein, an early suspect, had repeatedly denied that he penned the anonymous novel. He was flushed out after a handwriting expert hired by the Washington Post matched changes on an early manuscript with his handwriting.

Last week he strode into a packed conference room in the Manhattan headquarters of the book's publisher, Random House, clutching a fake nose and moustache. He would not be needing them any more, he said. "My name is Joe Klein and I wrote Primary Colours. I did it by myself and with no secret sources," he said.

His admission ended the frenzied guessing game that has gripped political and publishing circles since the book went on sale in the US in January.

The author's apparently considerable inside knowledge of the Clinton campaign led early betting to focus on White House aides and writers with known links to the president's inner circle.

President Clinton, portrayed in the book as a lecherous and ruthless political opportunist, told the baffled press corps the novelist's identity was "the only secret I've seen kept in Washington in three years".

Mr Klein was first named as the probable author by the Guardian in February, after a language expert retained by New York magazine discovered close similarities between his writing style and language used in the novel.

The Week in Britain James Lewis

Tory privatisers start to eye the welfare state

MANY feared the wholesale privatisation of the social security system when the Social Security Secretary, Peter Lilley, announced that private businesses would be invited to tender for the job of paying out child benefits, which go regularly to more than 7 million families. The aim, said Mr Lilley, was to cut administrative costs, though critics saw it as the forerunner of a much wider revolution.

The Government wants to cut by a quarter the £3 billion annual cost of administering the benefits system; and it wants to cut the 88,000 staff employed to make the payments by more than 20,000. Leaders of civil service unions forecast that the work would go to large computerised firms — such as lottery or pools promoters — familiar with collecting information, keeping records and paying out money.

It was unfortunate that Mr Lilley's announcement closely followed the leak of a Treasury document which considered drastic options to slash the welfare state and oblige individuals and families to take out private insurance to cover retirement, unemployment and incapacity.

The Chancellor, Kenneth Clarke, who has been almost alone among senior Cabinet ministers in resisting rightwing Tory pressure to reduce the welfare state to a minimalist safety net, breezily dismissed the document as the work of "kids in the office". It was, however, commissioned by the Treasury's permanent secretary, Sir Terry Burns, as an exercise in "thinking the unthinkable" and looking at possible scenarios facing the department in the years 2000-2005.

The document also targeted higher education, suggesting that present provisions should be replaced by sixth-form vouchers, student loans and employer contributions. The shadow chancellor, Gordon Brown, called the paper "a savage indictment of what a fifth-term Conservative government would look like. It amounts to a blueprint for the demolition of the welfare state."

But, on welfare matters, Labour is itself on shaky ground and came under attack last week from a former Cabinet minister, Barbara Castle, for abandoning its commitment to maintain the value of retirement pensions. Mr Brown also has it in mind to withdraw child benefit for the over-16s. And the shadow social security secretary, Chris Smith, has said it is "not a key concern" of Labour as to how the welfare state is actually administered.

CONVICTED loyalist terrorists were invited to Downing Street to meet the Prime Minister, John Major, as part of his effort to inject new momentum into the faltering Northern Ireland peace process.

The loyalist delegation consisted of two members of the Ulster Democratic Party, closely aligned to the paramilitary Ulster Defence Association, and the Progressive Unionist Party, which is said to articulate the thinking within the Ulster Volunteer Force. A member of the UDP team was John White, who brutally killed an Ulster senator and a woman friend in the 1970s.

Mr Major refuses to talk to Sinn Fein, the political wing of the IRA, because it has abandoned its ceasefire. He has repeatedly said that he respects the restraint shown by loyalist paramilitary groups, though they were widely suspected of carrying out attacks on Catholics, and their homes and property, in the wake of the previous week's rioting. Sinn Fein accused him of applying double standards.

Orange Order marches, the cause of that violence, are not yet over. Others are planned in Londonderry, Belfast and elsewhere in the next month and could easily result in further, dangerous confrontations.

THE disaster-prone Child Support Agency showed in its annual accounts that a total of £686 million was owed to it by absent parents and might have to be written off. And the head of the National Audit Office, Sir John Bourn, again complained about the "high level" of inaccuracy in the agency's child maintenance orders.

The agency's objective is to chase up absent fathers and force them to contribute to their children's upkeep. It was severely criticised in 1994-95 for its draconian methods and staff inaccuracies in calculating maintenance orders.

More than £500 million of the potentially uncollectable £686 million was said to arise from the interim maintenance orders, which are still being set at punitive levels but typically reduced once an absent parent's proper liability has been calculated.

PRINCESS DIANA, now awaiting divorce and no longer "Her Royal Highness", delivered a blow to around 100 charities when she resigned as their patron. She will retain her links with just six charities and suggested tartly in her letters to the others that "someone else in the Royal Family" might be better suited to support them.

Even if, as some would argue, the loss of the HRH title has magically turned her into a commoner, the princess is still regarded as fair game by the paparazzi. She and her sister-in-law, the Duchess of York, said they would bring charges against two French photographers who were arrested in the grounds of their holiday chateau on the French Riviera. They, and two others arrested, could face charges of trespassing and invasion of privacy.



Said gives Oxford £20m for business school

Donald MacLeod

OXFORD university last week accepted a donation of £20 million for a business school — from a Syrian-born businessman.

Wafic Rida Said, an admirer of Lady Thatcher and friend of the former minister Jonathan Aitken, would be immortalised by Oxford alongside other generous benefactors, said Lord Jenkins of Hillhead, the university's chancellor.

The new Oxford Business School will attract the "brightest and best" students and staff, offering a grounding for business leaders, said Mr Said, who will take a keen interest in the building planned for the centre of Oxford. It will be the latest in a list of construction projects that have made his name and fortune, notably in Saudi Arabia.

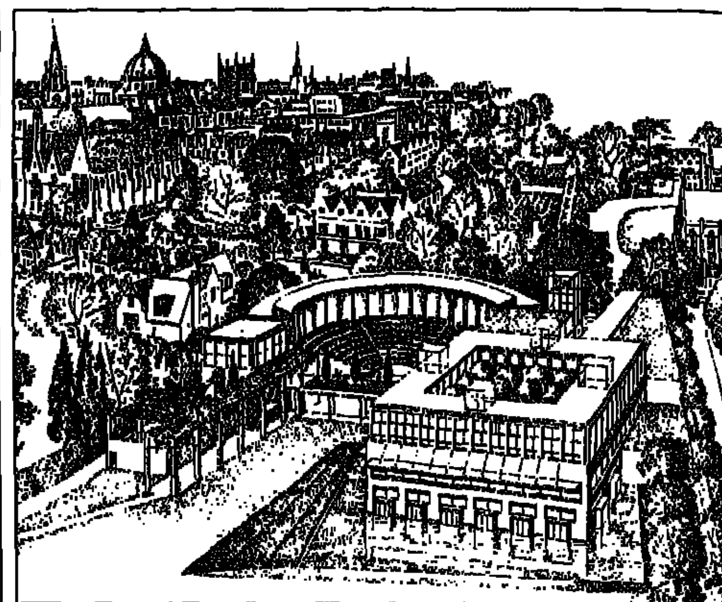
Mr Said commented: "This is a great opportunity for Oxford to spread its standards of excellence to this new sphere." His gift will enable the university to catch up with Cambridge in having a business school to take on international competition like Chicago and Stanford.

The school, scheduled to open in 1998 in the city's Mansfield Road, will eventually take 500 students, 150 of them on Masters of Business Administration (MBA) courses. The first 40 places for next year attracted more than 200 high calibre applications. One in four of the students are from Britain, with the rest from Europe, North America and the Pacific Rim.

Lord Jenkins said Oxford, which has just completed a £340 million appeal, was one of a handful of world class universities. "It would to my mind be crazy to let slip that national asset but as no Government seems likely to provide enough funds to renew and maintain that position, we have to do it ourselves."

● Cambridge university is to accept a £1.5 million donation from BAT Industries, one of the world's leading cigarette makers.

Senior staff agreed to accept the donation, but the move angered health groups and many academics who demanded the university reject the "blood money" from BAT because of the risks of smoking.



Artist's impression of the proposed Oxford Business School (above) and Wafic Said (below), who is providing £20 million to help build it



Tories plan Royal Mail sale

David Hencke and Seumas Milne

THE blueprint for a scheme to break up the Royal Mail into 11 regional franchises — each to be tendered to private firms — is being planned by ministers for inclusion in the Conservative election manifesto.

The plans to revive the controversial privatisation of the Post Office will be sent to Downing Street by a team of ministers under the Trade Secretary, Ian Lang, and would be intended to cut 5p from the cost of posting a letter.

The proposals will also include selling off Parcelforce, the Post Office's carrier, to a private company and an acceleration of the leasing of the remaining Crown Post Offices to private owners. Post Office Counters Ltd, which has overall responsibility for sub and main post offices, will remain in the public sector.

The privatisation of the Post Office, which makes a profit of £420 million a year, is likely to raise more than £1 billion.

A new regulator, the director of Ofpost, will be created to supervise the privatised mail service, joining colleagues responsible for rail, gas, water, electricity, telephones and the National Lottery. The most dramatic impact for the public would be a plan to replace the present national 26p first class and 20p second class with a new maximum charge set by the regulator for national mail. Competing companies would offer lower rates inside their regional franchises and lower national rates.

The plan is based on what ministers regard as the successful privatisation of British Rail — with the aim of encouraging different private companies to bid for 15-year franchises to run Royal Mail regions.

The move comes at a sensitive time. Ministers are planning to suspend the Post Office monopoly of post under £1 if the series of strikes by staff continues. But the privatisation plans suggest that ministers still want to keep a national delivery system for the foreseeable future, suggesting it would be restored immediately the dispute finished.

Ministers appear to believe that the strikes will change attitudes to privatisation among members of the public, who have constantly opposed the sale of the Royal Mail.

But the Government was forced to delay lifting the £1 post monopoly to break the strike after discovering that the European Union could oblige it to introduce 17.5 per cent VAT on all letter deliveries.

At the heart of the dispute is an EU directive which exempts the Post Office from paying VAT provided it keeps a monopoly public service. However, lifting the monopoly, which is on the delivery of all letters up to £1, will negate that exemption and as couriers already pay VAT on parcel and express deliveries, they would have to charge VAT at 17.5 per cent on top of the first-class 26p stamp. If they failed to do this they could be open to legal action and end up having to absorb the VAT in their costs.

Post Office managers last week abandoned their refusal to negotiate further with the union and talks on the dispute — and that of the Tube drivers — are to resume at the conciliation service, Acas. The Post Office conceded that last week's 24-hour stoppage by 130,000 sorting and delivery staff was solid, while the Tube walkout by Aslef and the Rail Maritime and Transport union left few Underground services.

Tony Blair found himself under fire over his stand on the strikes. Prime Minister John Major welcomed his call for binding arbitration and a return to work by Tube drivers, but mockingly pressed Mr Blair's deputy, John Prescott — who is sponsored by the RMT — to back his leader, and demanded both condemn the strikes. Mr Blair's office denied a rift with Mr Prescott, as well as statements by well-placed Labour sources that Mr Blair had been considering a policy of compulsory binding arbitration for disputes in essential public services.

Issues behind the actions

POST: The union wants to end six-day working; a 1½-hour cut in the 41½-hour week; the protection of full-time jobs and the second delivery; and the abandonment of plans for "team working". Royal Mail has offered five-day working by 2000 and the 1½-hour cut in exchange for greater productivity, teamworking and a streamlined pay system.

TUBE: The unions want managers to honour an agreement to cut one hour off their 38½-hour working week in exchange for productivity gains. London Transport says further gains must be made.

FIRE: The union wants proposed cuts abandoned. Derbyshire fire authority says central funding cuts make them unavoidable.

In Brief

SHOOTING organisations have launched a £25-a-head appeal to gun owners to finance a campaign to prevent a ban on handguns in the wake of the Dunblane massacre and the emotional appeals against handguns made by relatives of the victims.

HOWARD HUGHES, an unemployed former odd-job man who raped and strangled seven-year-old Sophie Hook, has been given three life sentences at Chester crown court.

A 13-YEAR-OLD boy has been remanded into secure local authority care after being charged with the murder of schoolgirl Jade Matthews.

A HIGH Court judge allowed a legal challenge to go ahead against the refusal of the Home Secretary, Michael Howard, to let a Nepalese teenager adopted by a British businessman stay in the country.

BILLIONAIRE financier Sir James Goldsmith is to challenge former Tory minister David Mellor at the next election. Sir James, who leads the Referendum Party, will contest the south-west London seat of Putney, where Mr Mellor has a majority over Labour of 7,526.

A SCOTTISH soldier who claims to have been taunted with names like "black jock" and "porridge wog" is to sue the army for destroying his career. Winston Clay, of Maryhill, Glasgow, blames racial harassment for the court martial he faces after deserting the 16th Royal Artillery regiment.

A CHAPTER in aviation history ended in tragedy when the world's last airworthy Mosquito fighter bomber crashed during an air display, killing both pilot and navigator.

THE LEGAL Aid Board has pulled the plug on a £15 million compensation claim against cigarette makers by former smokers who contracted lung cancer and other smoking-related diseases.

HUMAN rights campaigners claimed that British-made water cannons were used by the Indonesian government at a huge democracy rally in Jakarta last month, despite Foreign Office protests that defence equipment supplied to the military regime would not be turned against civilians.

POLICE are investigating the possibility of a suicide pact after a post-mortem revealed poison in the bodies of a family of five found dead in their Southampton living room. Police suspect Mahendra Karia, aged 44, and his wife, Majuri, aged 39, killed their three children before killing themselves.

Prime Minister hired out for donations

Jonathan Calvert and David Leigh

JOHN MAJOR and his Cabinet colleagues are being hired out for private dinners with wealthy businessmen by a secretive Conservative fund-raising organisation in return for party donations of up to £100,000.

The businessmen are being offered private audiences with the Government's most senior politicians where they can seek to influence government policies which affect their business interests.

The donations are being channelled through the Premier Club, which was established last November and has Mr Major as its patron. Last week, membership secretary Frances Prenn told a potential donor how he could avoid revealing his donation by listing the payment as "entertainment" on company accounts.

An investigation has revealed that the club's chairman, property tycoon John Beckwith, is a leading member of a consortium which ministers have short-listed for the controversial sell-off of 58,000 Ministry of Defence homes.

The club has two tiers: for £10,000, "ordinary members" are invited to suppers with Cabinet members — in the past year they have met Deputy Prime Minister Michael Heseltine and Public Services Minister Roger Freeman. For £100,000, "founder members" are invited to two dinners a year with Mr Major.

Last week an Observer reporter, posing as an assistant to a wealthy businessman, spoke to Mrs Prenn. In a recorded conversation, she said his company would not have to disclose such payments as political donations, even though all the money would go to Conservative funds. She said it could be listed in the company's accounts as entertainment.

The cheque would be written to the Premier Club: "It is declared as a pre-profit expenditure or however you want to do it — for either entertaining or whatever."

John Major: patron of the Premier Club PHOTO ROSS PARRY

Under the Companies Act, all companies must declare direct or indirect donations in their annual accounts. Experts agree such a scheme would be of questionable legality.

The Premier Club was set up last November, when the Conservatives' overdraft stood at £11 million. Its brochure, produced by Central Office, lists a number of advantages offered to its "strictly private and confidential" members. These include dinners and lunches in Westminster, a policy information service and detailed briefings.

On the telephone, Mrs Prenn also revealed the "unique benefits" for those who pay six-figure sums. She said: "Sometimes there's a very sensitive political issue: we try and tell them what's the best way of getting around it."

She continued: "And if there are specific business concerns which [the member] has, you know, we will try and assist in getting that answered. We cannot promise what the end result will be, but we can certainly facilitate an opportunity for one to air one's views."

Mr Beckwith's £1.5 billion bid for the MoD homes will be decided next month. His consortium is one of four that have been short-listed. The Government has attempted to keep the identity of the bidders secret, refusing to let a select committee of MPs publish the names.

Senior Shadow Cabinet member Robin Cook immediately signalled that he would pursue the issue of this commercial relationship. He was writing to the Prime Minister to demand that Mr Beckwith be removed from the tender list for the MoD property sale. "This is a Government not run for the people but for the sole interest of the Conservative party," said Mr Cook.

Disclosure of the details of the Premier Club operation will severely embarrass Mr Major, who has claimed, after repeated scandals over secret donors to the party, to have distanced himself from the process. He told the Commons in May he had devolved all responsibility for it to the party chairman, Brian Mawhinney. Dr Mawhinney is listed as the president of the Premier Club, along with Mr Major as patron. — *The Observer*

● MPs will be required not to use confidential information received in the course of their parliamentary duties "for the purpose of financial gain" under a new code of conduct published last week.

In the wake of Lord Nolan's inquiry into standards of conduct in public life, MPs will face even tighter restrictions on outside earnings which clash with their duties as elected parliamentarians if, as expected, the Commons votes to accept the new code.

Hogg bows to EU livestock organs ban

John Palmer in Brussels and Alex Bellos

DOUGLAS HOGG, the Agriculture Minister, will announce this week new measures to counteract fresh BSE fears after the European Commission signalled a sweeping ban designed to prevent sheep, goat and deer organs entering the food chain.

Mr Hogg's move comes after EU farm ministers, meeting in Brussels on Monday, desperately played down fears of a new food crisis. They described the latest proposals, unveiled to them by the Agriculture Commissioner Franz Fischler, as precautionary. But the move will fuel public concern over "mad cow disease" and its human equivalent, Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease.

Mr Fischler's proposals for a Europe-wide ban on brain, spinal cord and spleen from goats, sheep and deer for human consumption were announced after new evidence indicated that BSE can be transmitted to sheep. The ban has to be ratified by the EU veterinary group next week, but Mr Hogg was expected to adopt unilaterally the same measures this week.

EU officials privately expressed worries that a beef-style consumer panic, which devastated the industry, could be triggered by suggesting the scale of the BSE problem was greater than thought. There are predictions of a one-third fall in sales of sheep products. Britain and France, the main European producers, would be hit hardest.

The UK sheep market is worth more than £1.3 billion, £45 million of it from wool. Total live sheep exports in 1995 were 1.1 million head, value £40 million, while total exports of sheep meat were 140,000 tonnes, value £280 million.

Mr Hogg was trying to play down the crisis on Monday, saying that 99 per cent of sheep heads were destroyed and no other sheep or goat offal entered the human food chain. A ministry spokeswoman said that while it was known that sheep injected with BSE caught the disease there was no evidence it could be transferred naturally.

Mr Fischler said his proposals were based on the findings of both EU and French vets working independently. Whereas it was assumed cattle picked up BSE through meat and bone meal containing sheep scrapie, which has been around for 200 years, it may now be found that sheep have contracted BSE from feed contaminated with diseased cattle. There is no known instance of sheep infecting humans.

Heritage chief quits over 'irregularities'

Guardian Reporters

ENGLISH Heritage was in disarray last week after the sudden resignation of its chief executive following an inquiry into "administrative irregularities".

Chris Green, a former senior British Rail manager, left his post just over a year into a five-year contract.

A statement from the quango, which runs 400 of England's historic buildings and ancient monuments, said: "The resignation follows a report concerning alleged administrative irregularities by Mr Green in the discharge of his duties.".

Mr Green, aged 52, was quoted in the statement as saying: "I accept responsibility and have decided to resign in the best interests of English Heritage."

A spokeswoman for the group refused to elaborate on the alleged irregularities. Details of the inquiry were also not being released.

However, insiders at the group's Savile Row offices in central London told of increasing tensions in the past few weeks between Mr Green and chairman Sir Jocelyn Stevens. One said: "He will be much missed. His attitude was that too much was being changed, too fast. He said to staff it was time to take a step back and take things more slowly."

When Mr Green took up his post there were predictions of looming clashes with Sir Jocelyn — once nicknamed "Piranha teeth" — who has recently been invited by Heritage Secretary Virginia Bottomley to renew his five-year tenure, which was due to expire in April. In early June he warned her department of the impending inquiry.

Mr Green, former director of ScotRail, joined English Heritage in March 1995 — disappointing ministers who hoped he would launch a management buyout for the rail business. But instead of pioneering rail privatisation, he became increasingly critical of it.

His appointment at English Heritage, which has an annual budget of £100 million and has itself been accused of "privatising" some of its sites by handing them over to other bodies, came as a surprise.

A high-flying BR management trainee, Mr Green rose to prominence as managing director of Network SouthEast before moving on to head InterCity, where he turned the loss-making business into a profitable company which — unlike other BR passenger businesses — was not dependent on governmer subsidy.

Peers admit defeat on asylum bill

Alan Travis

THE House of Lords this week backed down in its confrontation with the Government over the rights of asylum seekers to claim welfare benefits.

Peers on Monday voted by 182 to 168, a Government majority of 14, to reject a Labour move to ensure that asylum seekers had three days' grace to claim refugee status before losing entitlement to welfare benefits. The decision overturns a vote earlier this month when peers backed the three days' grace move by a majority of three.

Afterwards Labour's deputy leader in the Lords, Lord McIntosh, said the Government had relied on the votes of hereditary peers, very few of whom had listened to the debate. The Liberal Democrats' Earl Russell said the decision effectively wrote the "political death warrant" for the hereditary element in the upper house.

But Lord Campbell of Alloway warned peers were risking confrontation with the Commons if they continued to insist on an amendment which MPs had already rejected.

For the Government, Lord Mackay of Ardbrecknish insisted the issue was not about a safe haven to those fleeing persecution but exploiting the benefit system. Benefit curbs had cut numbers of asylum seekers by 52 per cent in June: "Many asylum applications are in reality benefit applications."

The Asylum and Immigration Bill was expected to reach the statute book later this week.

Wave machine

The World Service broadcasts in 43 languages worldwide as well as a 24-hour continuous service in English. 140 million listeners tune in each week.

Frequencies

Where you can get the world service in the UK

MW 648
SW 6.195
SW 9.410
and on all R4 frequencies after closedown

Shortwave frequencies vary around the world. In some countries it is available on FM and MW

Details from: BBC World Service Bush House, Strand, London WC2B 4PH

Radio news compared

Main news stories at 1pm, July 16

World service	BBC Radio 4
1 Yeltsin meets Gore amid fresh speculation over the Russian president's health	1 Princess of Wales resigns as patron of 100 charities
2 China general in Hong Kong to inspect British troops	2 Ireland: talks on political future resume
3 Ukraine Prime Minister Lazarenko survives assassination attempt	3 Six Indian tourists abducted and killed in Kashmir
4 Serbs threaten NATO targets if Karadzic is arrested	4 Yeltsin makes first public appearance in weeks
5 Ireland: all party talks resume	5 Share prices on London stock exchange fall sharply
6 Australian sprinter denies drug charge	6 13-year-old boy arrested by police hunting killer of schoolgirl Jade Matthews

Listening around the world

Region	Listening in English	Listening in any other language
Europe	4.5 million	14.5 million
FSU & SW Asia	0.5 million	8.5 million
Asia Pacific	4 million	8 million
The Americas	6 million	9 million
Middle East & Africa	13.5 million	46 million
South Asia	7.5 million	51.5 million

GRAPHIC: STEVE VILLERS

On the up

Global weekly audience figures

1992	1993	1994	1995	1996
120m	124m	130m	133m	140m

The battle for Bush House

Andrew Culf on the long and bitter struggle for the soul of a globally respected institution

THE days of Bush House, the central London landmark that has symbolised the proud international reputation of the World Service for more than 50 years, are numbered.

The lease expires at the end of 2004, but plans to move out the World Service's staff are to be accelerated. They are to be "co-located", according to BBC jargon, on a single site at White City, home of the Television Centre in west London.

It was a highly symbolic announcement as the battle raging at the heart of the BBC intensified. The struggle for the soul of the World Service represents a fierce clash between two distinct broadcasting cultures.

On one side, the traditionalists, led by Mark Tully, the veteran foreign correspondent, and John Tusa, the service's former managing director, are waging a campaign to preserve a globally-respected institution.

On the other, the BBC modernists, led by the director general, John Birt, and his news chief, Tony Hall, have laid out a strategic vision of the BBC's role in an uncertain digital future.

In simple terms it is an argument over whether the World Service should retain its own news operation or be integrated in the BBC's domestic news machine.

Mr Hall left little room for doubt: "The integration of BBC News and World Service news will allow all



BBC journalists to build the strongest force in news across the globe."

The two sides have been sniping at each other all month. The campaign to save the World Service mounted by Bush House staff has already won the support of nearly 1,500 staff and 240 MPs.

Mr Tusa took to BBC Radio 4's airwaves to condemn the "absolutely terrifying ignorance" of the BBC's bosses. He upstaged Sir Christopher Bland, the BBC's new chairman, who appeared 40 minutes later accusing Mr Tusa of being three years out of date.

The BBC's news editors propelled the story on to Radio 4's lunchtime agenda. The World at One presenter, Nick Clarke, secured a public admission from Sam Younger, managing director of the World Service, that he had considered resignation over the changes.

He knew about them just hours before the public announcement, and they had been a "shock to the system", he confessed.

But he decided to stay. "Recent announcements amount to the assurances I need to put hand on heart and say they will be able to serve the World Service's audiences at least as effectively as in the past," he said later.

The BBC's annual report reveals why the World Service is worth fighting for. In his review, Mr Birt delivered a glowing appraisal of its performance in a year in which it increased its audience from 133 million to 140 million worldwide.

Mr Birt's blueprint for a reorganised BBC would pull together radio and television into bi-media directorates and separate commissioning from production. The World Service's foreign language services would be left untouched but English, drama and education programmes would be commissioned from BBC Production, a new directorate serving domestic radio networks.

English language news and current affairs programmes would be commissioned from BBC News, the directorate which makes domestic news programmes. Mr Hall confirmed that a dedicated World Service news team will remain an integrated unit within BBC News.

The objectors believe World Service's international agenda and reputation will be swallowed up in a bland and monolithic news operation, driven by domestic priorities. Their message is that the World Service works well and does not need to change.

● James Boyle, the head of Radio Scotland, has been appointed controller of Radio 4, one of the highest-profile jobs in broadcasting.

Mr Boyle — known as MacBirt for the way he transformed Radio Scotland — takes over in the autumn following Michael Green's retirement.

Comment, page 12

Skills will be jettisoned

Against

The following is an edited version of a statement to the Commons select committee on foreign affairs by John Tusa, former managing director of the BBC World Service.

I DO NOT have to labour the record of BBC World Service's achievements, the standing it enjoys at home and abroad, and the credit it brings to Britain. The proposed changes, announced suddenly last month without prior consultation, or subsequent explanation, threaten to do irreparable damage to this institution. I urge delay and consultation.

The World Service is a universally acknowledged success as it stands. Audiences have increased over a decade as more and more programming has originated from World Service itself.

Do not believe those who urge restructuring on the grounds that the BBC cannot afford duplicate newsrooms. The World Service has never duplicated domestic news. The World Service newsroom is a specialist centre dedicated solely to "international news from a global perspective". Domestically originated international news is "international news from a British perspective". There is nothing wrong with that for a domestic audience; the global audience does not want it.

The so-called concession under which World Service News and Current Affairs remains at Bush House merely allows the present situation to continue — with one supreme disadvantage. Under the managerial control of central BBC news and current affairs at TV centre, the World Service newsroom will have to apply to them for the news they deliver by themselves under existing structures. Another layer of bureaucracy and costs will be added.

The 42 language services depend for their quality and programme vitality not just on their daily relationship with World Service news but with the whole corpus of World Service English-language script-writing and programme-making.

It is this interconnection of broadcasting skills, specialist area knowledge, and a culture of dedication to the needs of a global audience that the BBC changes will destroy.

Changes will help BBC thrive

For

Tony Hall, chief executive of BBC News, puts the case for the proposals.

THE big question facing the BBC's journalism today is how we keep alive the first hand, eye-witness reporting tradition that is at the heart of what we do. We must meet head-on the challenge of changing technologies and a phenomenally competitive broadcasting environment.

The other great challenge for us is funding. The licence fee is pegged to inflation. And many of our costs are rising beyond that rate. So to carry on doing what we are currently doing — let alone adapt to a new environment — we have to ensure that we get the best possible value for the money we spend. The picture for the World Service is even worse. Its finances are under unprecedented pressure as a result of reductions in funding from the Government.

BBC News was formed last month to meet those twin challenges. By putting together the domestic and World Service newsgathering operations, the BBC is playing to one of its unique strengths. Our correspondents are based everywhere it matters. Now we will be able to deploy them more effectively and expand our network of bureaux.

Combining our operations will be more efficient. We can eliminate duplication on the logistical side and ensure we send the right number of reporters on stories. This will make real savings. We need those savings because our aim is simple: to get more people into the field to ensure that the BBC's journalism thrives.

A senior World Service journalist will manage all our foreign bureaux and will be responsible for ensuring that World Service news and programming get the stories they want.

The World Service news operation will be a separate team in BBC News. We are also creating a new unit bringing together specialist programme makers from the World Service and domestic radio and television to produce programming about world affairs.

Your views

E-mail your views or experiences of the BBC World Service to **savebush@guardian.co.uk**

Readers with access to the Internet can browse through Guardian articles and feedback from other readers on our special internet site, **http://www.guardian.co.uk/savebush/**

MPs vent fury at 'tsar' Birt's plans

Martin Kettle

JOHN Birt's World Service plans and management style were condemned as dictatorial last week as the BBC's director-general faced a torrid session of questioning by angry MPs at Westminster.

Members of the all-party Commons foreign affairs committee accused Mr Birt of acting like "a sort of tsar" in giving less than 24 hours notice to senior BBC colleagues and government ministers of his plan to merge the World Service into the corporation's domestic broadcasting operation.

During an hour of hostile questioning from backbench MPs, Mr Birt fought off suggestions that his plans should be suspended for further consultation. "The management of the BBC is a matter for the BBC," he told the committee.

Flanked by deputy director-general Bob Phillis and World Service managing director Sam Younger, Mr Birt claimed that there was "quite wide acceptance" among World Service and BBC staff of his management changes, which were designed "to enable the service to respond more effectively to the challenges of the future". However, he admitted that his management team were divided over the plans.

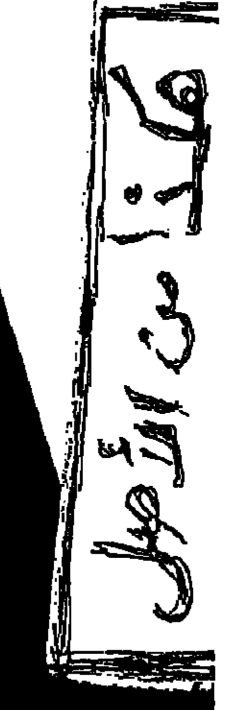
He said that it would not have been "sensible or possible" to have told his colleagues of his plans any earlier.

Committee members queued up to challenge Mr Birt's version of events. Sir John Stanley, Conservative MP for Tonbridge and Malling, said there was now "a vast rift" between the management of the BBC and "the overwhelming majority of staff".

Bob Wareing, Labour MP for Liverpool West Derby, accused him of acting "not like a director general but like a sort of tsar".

The gruelling session finished on a note of enforced harmony, with Mr Birt assuring the MPs that his proposals would be "beneficial and dynamic".

● Mr Birt has received a 13 per cent salary increase, it was revealed last week. His salary rose by nearly £35,000 to £299,000 in 1995/96, prompting outrage from union officials.



Judge attacks growth hormone negligence as families win case

Clare Dyer

LETHARGY and inaction by the Department of Health and the Medical Research Council caused the deaths of young people who were treated with growth hormone infected with the deadly Creutzfeldt-Jacob virus, a High Court judge ruled last week.

Mr Justice Morland held that officials were negligent in not halting human growth hormone (HGH) treatment for short stature after they were alerted to fears about contamination with the slow-acting virus. He was delivering judgment in the first legal action over a pharmaceutical product to succeed in the English courts.

The group compensation claim was brought by families of 11 young people who died from the human form of "mad cow disease" after taking growth hormone as children to boost their stature.

But families in court reacted with dismay as it became clear that only those few who started the treatment after July 1, 1977, will be eligible for compensation. It was only after that date, the judge ruled, that growing information about the risk that CJD could be transmitted through the treatment pointed to a "clear duty" to halt the treatment programme.

Compensation, for those who qualify, still has to be assessed. The only certain beneficiaries are Zara, aged 10, and Nicola, aged 9, daughters of Patrick Baldwin, who died in 1992 aged 30. He started treatment in October 1977 and finished in 1980.

Tam Fry of the Child Growth Foundation, the parents' pressure group, said: "It is iniquitous the judgment should exclude families whose children have died from any kind of compensation. Any family of a child who has died should be treated equally."

Nearly 2,000 children were treated with the hormone, which was extracted from the pituitary glands of corpses in mortuaries. Mortuary technicians were paid 10p or 20p per gland to collect as many as they could, often from elderly people who died of dementia.

The slow virus, or prion, which causes CJD can incubate for up to 30 years, scientists believe. So an unknown number could still develop CJD, although no deaths have been recorded among those treated after 1980, when manufacture was switched to the government laboratory at Porton Down in Wiltshire.

A second group of claimants, who were treated with HGH but have not developed CJD, are suing for the psychological trauma and other problems of living with an uncertain future.

Mr Justice Morland outlined a damning catalogue of inaction on the part of the department and the Medical Research Council. According to the judge, officials displayed a "lack of drive and urgency" and acted "lethargically" in the face of mounting fears that HGH could be infected with the CJD virus.

A committee of specialists representing clinicians who were treating the children was "kept deliberately in the dark" about the concerns, said the judge.

A warning by an eminent virologist, Professor Peter Wildy, in 1977 that "any clinician who uses growth hormone must be made aware of the gruesome possibilities and their imponderable probabilities" was not passed on to the health service committee of clinicinns overseeing the treatment programme.

Comment, page 12

China anger at Dalai Lama's visit

Madeleine Bunting

THE DALAI LAMA visited Britain last week amid a flurry of protests from China that Britain was encouraging Tibetan "separatism". He was also confronted by demonstrations by British Buddhists accusing him of religious persecution.

But the Dalai Lama, the political and spiritual head of Tibet, refused to be downcast. At a packed press conference in the House of Commons before addressing MPs, he cracked jokes about his English worsening with age, before making an impassioned plea to the Chinese to negotiate over the future of his country.

He appealed to Britain's sense of moral responsibility to bring pressure to bear on China.

Referring to the "cultural genocide" being inflicted on Tibet and the recent wave of repression which has seen images of the Dalai Lama banned in Tibet, he said a political settlement was the only answer and offered talks "without any preconditions". He went on to meet the Foreign Secretary, Malcolm Rifkind, and

The Dalai Lama appealing to Britain PHOTOGRAPH: GRAHAM TURNER

Labour's foreign affairs spokesman, Robin Cook, to press Tibet's case.

The Chinese warned of the danger of a deterioration in Sino-British relations. A Chinese foreign ministry spokesman said: "By inviting the Dalai Lama to visit Britain and offering him a forum, the Tibetan group of the British House of Commons . . . abets the Dalai's action to split the motherland."

But it was the activities of a British Buddhist sect, the New Kadampa Tradition, opposed to the Dalai Lama, which most concerned the organisers of the visit.

More than 100 demonstrators gathered outside the Buddhist Society in central London, where the Dalai Lama was attending a reception to chant slogans and prayers.

They accuse him of persecuting fellow Tibetans in the refugee settlements in India for devotion to a deity called Dorge Shugden.

The Tibetan government-in-exile in Dharamsala, northern India, has announced the creation of a special committee of inquiry to look into the allegations, although it insists they are "entirely baseless".

Asked by journalists about the accusations, the Dalai Lama simply responded: go to India and look for yourself.

He then launched into a lengthy explanation of why he had decided to speak out against Dorge Shugden. He said that Tibetan Buddhism, if misused, could degenerate into "spirit worship".

Girl killed in French hostel

A 13-YEAR-OLD British girl on a school trip to Brittany in north-west France was found raped and murdered in her bed in the youth hostel dormitory she shared with four other pupils, *write Geoffrey Gibbs and Paul Webster in Paris.*

The body of Caroline Dickinson, a second year pupil at Launceston College, in Cornwall, was found by one of the four girls, aged 13 and 14, when they woke up.

The girl immediately told the other pupils in the dormitory and then got a teacher from a neighbouring room. A post-mortem examination revealed Caroline had been raped and then suffocated.

French detectives have arrested a 40-year-old man in connection with the murder.

The arrest follows the sighting of a tramp who was seen hanging around the hostel. One of Caroline's friends described the man as unshaven, with long brown hair, an earring and a tattoo on his upper arm.

Bingham defends judges

Clare Dyer

LORD Bingham, the new Lord Chief Justice, last week mounted a robust defence of judges against accusations that they were seeking to usurp Parliament's role. In his first speech since taking office, he declared: "To suggest that the judges are in any way equivocal in their deference to parliamentary sovereignty is preposterous."

Speaking at the Lord Mayor's annual dinner for judges at Mansion House in London, he insisted: "We have no extra-territorial ambitions. We have our work cut out to do our own job without wishing to do anyone else's."

The shadow lord chancellor, Lord Irvine, has accused senior judges of "judicial supremacy", and Tory politicians have suggested that judges who quashed ministerial decisions were putting themselves above Parliament.

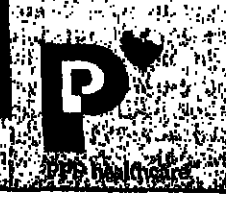
Lord Irvine took exception to lectures in which Sir John Laws, a High Court judge, suggested there was a "higher order" law under which acts of Parliament could be struck down. He also took Lord Bingham to task for arguing that if Parliament failed to legislate for a right to privacy, judges could develop one through court cases.

Lord Bingham said: "Far from challenging the authority of Parliament, judicial review buttresses the authority of Parliament by ensuring that powers conferred by Parliament are used as Parliament intended."

He added: "In the future as in the past, the judges will do their best to give effect to the spirit and the letter of parliamentary enactments."

He went on: "They will also, when need arises, contribute to the organic, incremental development of equity and the common law. So to declare is not to threaten judicial legislation, but to recognise the oldest, and in the eyes of international jurists, perhaps the greatest glory of our legal system."

Lord Bingham's predecessor, Lord Taylor, used such occasions to attack in uncompromising terms government plans for criminal justice legislation, including mandatory minimum terms and life sentences for some types of repeat offenders, which he argued would fetter judges' discretion in sentencing. Lord Bingham's style is less confrontational, but the message was the same.



Disservice to the World Service

JOHN BIRT has made an awful mistake and should admit it. The BBC'S take-over of its World Service offshoot is an act of cultural vandalism that should be rescinded forthwith. It beggars belief that the BBC's central command — which has lavished so many millions in pursuit of the latest corporate guru — could have unleashed such fundamental restructuring of the World Service without so much as waving the plans in front of those who were running it. By what impulse of self-destruction do otherwise sensible people suddenly turn on an icon of proven success in response to this year's flavoursome management theory? The World Service is a priceless national asset. It has a world brand-name and reputation among its peers that most multinational corporations would die for. As last week's BBC annual report confirmed, the World Service increased its weekly audience from 133 million to 140 million last year even before including countries, such as China, where proper measurement is not yet possible. This confirms the service as one of the few centres of world excellence that Britain can boast.

Sure, it brings in no revenues. It is one of those things that an altruistic Britain gives away for free: but it has an influence on world affairs that is impossible to price, as countless people, including Terry Waite, Nelson Mandela, the Dalai Lama and ex-President Gorbachev would attest to. It is successful because it knows its audience and isn't distracted by other factors. Of course, it shouldn't be immune from change. Of course, there must be synergetic opportunities with the BBC, as the information revolution sweeps the world. But instead of discussing mutual help, the BBC is imposing a virtual takeover of the English language side of the World Service — even if, *this time round*, some of the key posts will go to World Service personnel who have convinced themselves that the new system (including the BBC's Byzantine internal market) can be made to work. That may be true — but so is the opposite: that the World Service could easily have drawn on resources in the BBC's domestic service without jettisoning its successful culture. If it ain't broke, don't fix it.

Whatever the shortcomings of the BBC, however, the Government remains the main villain because of savage cuts in the budget of an organisation that should be benefiting from some of the savings made by the post-cold war reductions in defence spending. Instead of increasing the World Service's budget, the Government has forced a £5.4 million (20 per cent) cut in this year's capital budget to be followed by £10 million of cuts in 1997 and 1998 — on top of an 8 per cent cut in real terms over the previous three years. Goodness knows what will happen when the diminished grant-in-aid that the World Service receives direct from the Foreign Office gets mixed up with BBC's income from licence fees. There will be an even greater incentive by the Treasury to cut subsidies. In the coming battle between the globally-orientated World Service and the domestic BBC over staff economies does anyone seriously doubt who will be the loser? A better solution would be for Parliament to assume responsibility for the efficiency, impartiality and finances of the service before it becomes subsumed — as it surely will — in the ambitions of Birt's Broadcasting Corporation.

Young who died of negligence

SUDDENLY, the rush of honesty at the Department of Health in March over the dangers of BSE — even when senior ministers within the Cabinet were urging silence — becomes more understandable. It looks like a combination of guilt, shame, and an urge to compensate for earlier crimes. Last week's High Court ruling on Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease (CJD), the human form of "mad cow disease", has nothing to do with BSE. This action was about CJD's other main cause: human growth hormone. The eight families that brought the suit had all lost children through human growth hormone treatment. There are few more horrible deaths. Yet what the court action has exposed is negligence at the highest level. Almost unbelievably, officials within the department and staff at the Medical Research Council (MRC) failed to pass on warnings about the dangers of such treatment to the key committee of clinicians which was supervising the therapeutic programme. Although officials were warned of the dangers of pituitary-infected CJD passing into the treatment process, the clinicians were not. The court concluded that such negligence was "materially" responsible for children in the case developing CJD.

About 2,000 children have been treated with human growth hormone. The children were suffering from stunted growth. The hormone was extracted from the pituitary glands of 900,000 corpses. It was extremely successful in increasing growth by up to 12 inches. What began as a clinical trial under the MRC had by 1977 become a therapeutic programme under the Department of Health. It was brought to an end in 1985 after three deaths in the US from the use of the hormone. Since then genetically engineered hormone has been used. Meanwhile 16 children from the British programme have died and another three are terminally ill.

From the beginning, the Department of Health and the MRC denied liability. Mr Justice Morland made short shrift of such arguments. Quite so. The judge was careful to note the dangers of hindsight, the need to remember the state of scientific knowledge at the time, and to shut out of his mind the suffering which the victims experienced. But he also noted that the first glimmering of an infectious agent emerged in the 1960s and 1970s. By 1977 the risks of using pituitary glands of people suffering from dementia had been established. The precise molecular size and weight of the CJD infectious agent has still not been determined. But the judge was in no doubt that all reasonable practicable steps should have been taken to minimise danger. This the Department of Health and the MRC failed to do.

Ministers consistently rejected petitions — and parliamentary pressure — for a public inquiry into the scandal. Australia showed the way. Its public inquiry showed scientists did believe CJD could be transmitted through pituitary hormones and disclosed the fact that British mortuary technicians were sending glands of people who died of dementia for processing. The need now is to provide the bereaved — and the psychiatrically harmed survivors — with proper compensation. This is no time for a legalistic approach. Negligence needs proper and full compensation.

Pay up and play the game

ENOCH POWELL used to say that as a citizen he looked forward every year to paying his taxes. Not so Rupert Murdoch. Mr Murdoch's News Corporation paid a meagre $118 million in taxes on profits of $1.2 billion. In the UK, his company paid no tax at all on declared profits of $254 million. No one suggests that he is doing anything illegal. The zero rate of tax is partly achieved by offsetting past losses against profits and by using tax allowances linked to capital investment. Mr Murdoch, to his credit, thinks long-term and is not afraid to risk money in new investment at a time when most of British industry has been investment-shy. But this only explains part of the low tax charge: the rest is the result of reducing profits through devices like intra-company loans, often routed through subsidiaries located in tax-paying deserts like the British Virgin islands, where corporation tax is a mere 1 per cent. Interest is paid in high-tax jurisdictions and profits collected in low-tax jurisdictions. Again, nothing illegal, just unreal and tacky.

Rupert Murdoch is no ordinary citizen. He runs newspapers around the world, which regularly tear people and governments apart when they depart from what his papers regard as proper public behaviour. If politicians are found fiddling their expenses or indulging in extra-marital affairs, that is regarded as fair game for the Murdoch tabloids. Perhaps it is time for the Murdoch press to embark on a new and highly-popular campaign for which its global reach makes it uniquely qualified: persuading corporations to pay their "fair" share of tax. For although News International is a glaring example, corporate tax avoidance is a worldwide problem needing a worldwide solution.

Ultimately, global avoidance will require international organisations to lay down enforceable ground rules. If Mr Murdoch wants to gain moral legitimacy for the power he wields over his readers, then he should take the lead in paying his dues. No representation without taxation.

Copy-cat terrorists of the Costa Dorada

John Hooper

IT HAS always been tempting to see the Basque guerrilla movement ETA and the IRA as parallel organisations, and never more so than after the weekend bombings on the Costa Dorada. Together, the two movements constitute most of what is left of one kind of the terrorism that took shape in Europe in the late sixties — that made up of men and women whose aims were primarily nationalist. The other kind — represented by organisations such as the Red Brigades and the Baader-Meinhof gang, whose aims were entirely revolutionary — is all but defunct.

At one time, the distinction between the two kinds was less clear. While it seemed the right thing to do, both ETA and the IRA used a vocabulary of Marxist rhetoric. Some of their members even came to believe that their main goal should be to transform society rather than redraw boundaries.

Just as the IRA witnessed a division between its Official and Provisional wings, ETA experienced a split between "politico-military" and "military" elements. In both cases, the groups that had put revolution first dissolved, leaving the nationalistic core to carry on killing.

ETA, like the IRA, has its roots in a conservative Roman Catholic society. Each can claim to be "terrorism with votes" — and can point to solid electoral backing for its aims, if not its methods. And if you were looking for a figure comparable to the IRA gunman of legend, you could scarcely do better than an ETA *gudari* (soldier) — traditionally, though nowadays much more rarely, the son of a peasant farmer.

There is evidence, particularly from arms seizures, to show that ETA and the IRA have occasionally co-operated. A Sinn Fein representative is usually to be found at big jamborees organised by ETA's political arm, Herri Batasuna.

The parallels between the two are particularly compelling right now because last month ETA ended a truce, a pretty unconvincing one of just seven days. The bombs at the weekend were the latest consequences of the failure of that truce to produce negotiations. Immediately after it lapsed, ETA attacked tourist targets. In the three weeks before July 20, it had let off six bombs in the tourist cities of Granada and Málaga.

It seems quite possible that what happened at the weekend was outright imitation — that in staging a high-profile attack having made a peace initiative, ETA was consciously mimicking the Provos. And just as the IRA struck at what it considered the nerve point of the British economy, so ETA is now striking at what it reckons to be the nerve point of the Spanish economy. For finance read tourism. For the City read the Costas.

The Basque terrorists are in much need of a good idea. Four years ago, ETA suffered the heaviest blow since its foundation 32 years earlier. In March 1992, French police officers stormed a farmhouse near the village of Bidart in south-western France and arrested all three members of the triumvirate then running the organisation. ETA has never recovered.

It would not be the first time that the Basques had looked to their Irish counterparts for a grisly sort of inspiration — they copied knee-capping from them in the late 1970s — and it is also easy to see how ETA could have been impressed by recent events in Ireland. The IRA's truce and its bloody end have also been followed by some of the worst sectarian violence in Ulster for years, and ETA's new leaders will have watched that from afar with particularly keen interest.

Until 1992, the only surviving branch of the organisation — ETA military — was commited to the idea that the best way to obtain its aims was to strike repeatedly and exclusively at a narrow range of targets associated with the Spanish state, mainly army officers, civil guards and Spanish, but not usually Basque, police officers. The dissolution of ETA politico-military had marked the disappearance of the view that the Basque country could be freed from Spanish control by means of a broader social revolution in the area.

Events at Bidart seem to have changed that. Professional ETA-watchers, in the parties and for the authorities, are convinced that the organisation's new leaders, notably a former journalist and critic, Mikel Albisu (Antza), are much more receptive to the argument that gains can be secured by stirring up trouble within the Basque country, and even setting Basque against Basque.

The first person to be killed by ETA after the general election five months ago was a Basque policeman. For more than a year before, ETA's associates had been active in promoting street violence in Basque cities.

BUT SO far there has been no evidence that the end of the truce will lead to greater conflict in the Basque country. And that is because of the key difference with Northern Ireland — the absence of a sectarian element. Albisu and his advisers may hope that a strategy of tension will eventually produce a "loyalist" community. But those Basques — a majority — who are opposed to ETA, do not have a common history comparable to that of Ulster's Protestants, and so far they have shown no desire to take to the streets against ETA's supporters.

On the contrary, the lack of a sectarian aspect gives the Spanish authorities room for manoeuvre that the British government does not enjoy. Madrid's response to the Basque problem has been to provide the Basques themselves with more autonomy — the Basque country is now reckoned to enjoy a great degree of self-government. Such a solution, applied to Northern Ireland, risks worsening the problem by delivering more power to the majority, Unionist community.

Autonomy is ETA's real problem. As the people who live in the Basque country get a progressively greater real say in the running of their lives and their homeland, its nationalist message becomes less appealing. This phenomenon is clearly discernible in the fall in the share of Herri Batasuna's vote at election time. This may be why ETA has been forced to the dubious expedient of copy-cat terrorism, and why — in the long run — the Basque problem could prove easier to solve than the Irish one.

Highway robbery by the super-rich

The digital revolution promised access to information and educational opportunities for all. Instead, it is producing a breed of billionaires who are worsening inequalities on every level, argues **Victor Keegan**

THE RICH, they will always be with us. But never in the history of the world have they been present in such quantities and in such flamboyant contrast with the poor as now. The year's most halting statistic has come in the UN's Human Development Report 1996. Take it in slowly: the total wealth of the world's 358 billionaires equals the combined incomes of the poorest 45 per cent of the world's population — 2.3 billion people.

The reigning king of the mega-wealthy (for this is a game played entirely by men) is Bill Gates, founder of Microsoft, the world's biggest computer software company. He tops the Forbes world league table — the bible of the Hello!-reading classes — with an estimated personal wealth of $18 billion: enough to purchase half a dozen poor countries. This year he ousted from the top slot Warren Buffett, the mild-mannered US businessman, who specialises in investing for the long-term and is now down to his last $15 billion.

After them comes a string of barely known names including Paul Sacher (of the Roche pharmaceuticals empire), Lee Shau Kee (Henderson Land Development Company), Tsai Wan-lin (Cathay Life Insurance), Li Ka-shing and Paul Allen, another founder of Microsoft. The movements of the Forbes table are an unmistakable sign of the times. On the up and up are the digerati of the information revolution, accompanied by entrepreneurs spawned by the East Asian miracle economies. On the down are holders of inherited wealth (not always quick enough to spot new trends) and those hitched to property assets which haven't been doing so well in recent years.

These days it seems almost impolite, assuredly unfashionable — and even Old Labour — to dare to wonder if such outrageous maldistribution of wealth is "fair". The Forbes top billionaires table is the virility symbol of post-modern America, the annual proof that everyone is free to use his or her God-given talents to cream off the world's limited supply of dollars.

The mantra of the moment is still "trickle-down" economics: the rich are encouraged to earn as much as they like — buttressed by huge salary increases and fat stock options — in the hope that the poor will be richer than they would otherwise have been from the crumbs that fall off the tables.

In practice it hasn't worked like that. The UN figures show that 100 countries have actually suffered economic decline or stagnation which has reduced the income of a quarter of the world's population. In 70 countries people are on average poorer than they were in 1980, and in 43 countries poorer than in 1970.

Inequality has not only grown between countries but within them. Average income per person in Britain is £11,096 but the bottom 20 per cent earn only £2,548, according to the UN, or only slightly higher than the bottom 20 per cent in Hungary.

Meanwhile billionaires are changing. Old-fashioned magnates are yielding to digital billionaires who make fortunes faster than anyone else in history. These rich really are different. In the old days ambitious businessmen would make their fortunes by building something like a car, which involved an assembly line, the manufacture of thousands of spare parts generating tens of thousands of new jobs around the world. Not any more. All the digital billionaires do is to rearrange the 1s and 0s of computer code into software packages selling for hundreds of dollars each.

Take Netscape, founded by James Clarke, which didn't exist 18 months ago but soared to more than $3 billion on the stock market after its flotation (it took General Dynamics more than 40 years to do that). Netscape makes the most popular "browser" for the Internet, enabling users to surf between computers all over the world and to search through a network of world data bases for information in a matter of seconds. It didn't invent the browser but, like Microsoft, it made an improved version of someone else's software (thereby confirming the rule that fortunes are never made by the inventors but by the adaptors). Netscape's software is now installed on an estimated 30 million computers around the world, exceeding the reach of even of the formerly all-conquering Microsoft.

Netscape's mode of wealth creation confounds the conventions both of finance and economics. It is mainly giving its software away. You don't have to buy it in the shops: you "download" it from the Internet. No disk, no manual: just millions of 1s and 0s cascading into your computer. It is the first company in history to be worth $5 billion by giving away its product. It's the post-modern equivalent of the philosopher's stone — turning base digits into gold. The stock markets go along with this because they reckon that one day Netscape will start charging for the browser and associated products: and with an installed base of 30 million (and rising) it hopes eventually to clean up.

Netscape's wealth creation activities also turn economics upside down: for the first time a company can create an almost infinite number of its product without using up any extra resources in the form of labour, machinery or transport. Punters simply download millions of copies from the central source. Netscape is undoubtedly producing "wealth" — one could easily imagine its browser selling for hundreds of pounds — but, as it isn't, its output doesn't get recorded in the official statistics, which only deal with output that generates money. In this sense the digital revolution is understating the expansion of the whole economy (gross domestic product) in the US.

What the Third World makes of these new companies, which can become richer than whole developing countries in a single year, can only be guessed at. In theory, the digital revolution ought to be a liberating force for poorer countries. The empowerment of information could enable poor people in deprived countries to leapfrog out of poverty without, as in the past, having to lay down expensive new infrastructure such as networks of cables. It is now theoretically possible to gain low-cost access to the Internet — the world's biggest single store of knowledge on practically any subject — from small mobile computers with built-in phone connections needing no wires.

It won't happen — not because it can't but because there aren't enough people wanting it to happen. All computers do for the Third World these days is to chronicle their decline more efficiently. As the Human Development Report notes, total economic wealth in the world (global GDP) is $23 trillion, of which only $5 trillion, or 22 per cent, is accounted for by developing countries, even though they have nearly 80 per cent of the world's population.

And it's getting worse. Between 1960 and 1991 the richest 20 per cent of the world's population increased their share of total global wealth from 70 per cent to 85 per cent, while the poorest 20 per cent saw their global share fall from a meagre 2.3 per cent to a disgraceful 1.4 per cent. By 1991 more than 85 per cent of the world's population received only 15 per cent of its income. Mrs Thatcher wasn't alone in redistributing money from the poor to the rich — just more ruthlessly efficient than the others.

The tragedy is that the theory of trickle-down economics that has gripped most of the Western world is now being proved to be a blind alley by the experience of the Asian Tiger economies which have combined very strong growth with much fairer distribution of incomes. The Human Development Report concludes that the assumptions of the 1980s and early '90s — that more equal distribution of incomes would destroy incentives and that the rich needed special encouragement to save and invest — have proved false. The key to growth is investment in education. Raising workers' education by one year raises gross domestic product by 9 per cent.

The irony is that the information revolution and its designated highway — the Internet — have the capacity to raise educational standards everywhere, thereby contributing to a less unequal society. Instead, the info-revolution is producing a new breed of billionaires who are worsening inequalities both in terms of financial rewards and in dividing the world into info-rich and info-poor. It's a new form of highway robbery.

Rich people often dismiss their wealth as "paper money" but this doesn't mean it can't be turned into cash. If (as one American critic observed) the 358 decided to keep $5 million or so each, to tide themselves over, and give the rest away, they could virtually double the annual incomes of nearly half the people on Earth. And pigs would fly.

World's top 10 billionaires

1 WILLIAM HENRY GATES III
Wealth: $18 billion
Listed by Forbes business magazine as the richest man in the world, Gates, 40, founded Microsoft, the world leader in PC software, with school friend Paul Allen (see below). Now chairman and chief executive.

2 WARREN BUFFETT
Wealth: $15.3 billion
Chair of investment, insurance and holding company Berkshire Hathaway, Buffet, 65, also has 10 per cent stake in American Express. Nicknamed the Sage of Omaha because of astute investment decisions.

3 PAUL SACHER
Wealth: $13.1 billion
Now 90, Swiss Sacher was appointed honorary member of the board of pharmaceuticals giant Roche after standing down at AGM.

4 LEE SHAU KEE
Wealth: $12.7 billion
Based in Hong Kong, Asia's richest man is chairman of Henderson Land and Henderson Investment.

5 TSAI WAN-LIN
Wealth: $12.2 billion
Founder of Taiwanese insurance empire Cathay Life.

6 LI KA-SHING
Wealth: $10.6 billion
Chairman of Cheung Kong (Holdings) Ltd and Hutchison Whampoa Ltd made his fortune by building up property around his Hong Kong plastic flowers factory. Major donor to the Conservative party, with strategic stakes in 20 listed companies, some controlled by Chinese mainland corporations. Hutchison Telecommunications is doing well in Hong Kong, as is the group's involvement in the Asiasat satellite project and Star television service.

7 YOSHIAKI TSUTSUMI
Wealth: $9.2 billion
Once listed as the world's richest individual but the Tsutsumi fortune has halved since 1987 because of falling Japanese property values.

8 PAUL G ALLEN
Wealth: $7.5 billion
Co-founder and second biggest shareholder of Microsoft Corp. Has stakes in several software, on-line, entertainment and sports companies.

9 KENNETH R THOMSON
Wealth: $7.4 billion
Son of the late Lord of Fleet, the chairman of Thomson Corp owns newspapers worldwide and has moved into electronic publishing. Also owns Hudson's Bay Company.

10 TAN YU
Wealth: $7 billion
Head of real estate empire stretching from the Philippines, Taiwan and China to San Francisco, Las Vegas and Houston. Left school at 13 to work as baggage boy in Manila; made his first million at 17, selling T-shirts.

HANNAH POOL

Murdoch and his small tax secret

The hugely profitable News Corporation saves millions on tax every year. How does it do it, ask **Roger Cowe** and **Lisa Buckingham**

RUPERT MURDOCH'S News Corporation made a profit of $1.2 billion last year. The group's tax bill was a meagre $117 million. That was $285 million less than most companies would have paid — enough to buy a small TV station, a clutch of regional newspapers or one year's exclusive coverage of Premier League football.

This is no one-off. News Corporation manages a similar saving every year. Not just in Australia, but in every other country within the group's embrace.

Almost all News Corporation profits were generated in Britain, where the News International subsidiary company owns the Times, Sunday Times, the Sun and 40 per cent of BSkyB, the highly successful satellite TV company.

But in News International's 1995 accounts — under the heading Corporation Tax at 33 per cent — you will find a dash. Nothing paid.

All multinational corporations have sophisticated tax planning designed to minimise the sums they hand over to governments. But News Corporation — competing in this entirely legal game — is in a class of its own.

Rupert Murdoch's empire paid tax at less than 7 per cent last year. Most large Australian companies pay at a rate of between 20 and 40 per cent. Most large corporations in the US and Britain pay the same rate.

So how does Mr Murdoch do it, and stay within the law?

News Corporation has been structured in such a Byzantine way and its financial manoeuvrings are so closely controlled that only Mr Murdoch and a handful of aides, led by finance director David DeVoe in New York, have the vaguest idea of what is going on.

The picture is unclear partly because many of News Corporation's subsidiaries — which comprise 19 pages of the group's annual report — are based in tax havens where little information is public.

The group has 49 subsidiaries in the British Virgin Islands, another 25 units based in the Cayman Islands, five more in the US Virgin Islands and four companies in the Netherlands Antilles. Other subsidiaries are based in Bermuda, Switzerland, Singapore and Jersey.

In addition, what appears to be a major unit — News US Holdings — which is backed by A$860 million ($680 million) of parent company investment, is shrouded in mystery because, under Australian corporate law, the financial details of subsidiary undertakings are not in the public domain.

Adding to the impenetrability of News Corporation's finances is the fact that the figures which are shown in a set of accounts on one side of the world can appear to change out of all recognition by the time they show up in the consolidated accounts of the parent organisation.

Like other big corporations, News Corporation gains tax relief on capital investment. The group is also a major investor. Since 1990, it has lavished A$3 billion on its newspaper operations and $1 billion in the US on TV and films. In all, it has ploughed an impressive A$4.4 billion — not including what it has spent on takeovers — into its businesses in the past six years. All that attracts tax allowances spread over several years, which explains more than half the tax saving.

The benefit is exaggerated because of the difference between depreciation for tax purposes and the rate at which assets are written off in the accounts. The printing presses at Wapping, for example, are being written off over 30 years in the accounts but the tax on that write-down will largely be claimed over just five years.

These are universal reasons why companies pay less tax than the standard rate. But News Corporation has plenty of other ideas on how to keep its tax payments low.

The enormous global spread of News Corporation also helps to keep its tax bill down. Some territories, where News Corporation has subsidiaries, such as the British Virgin Islands have a corporation tax rate of 1 per cent.

Mr Murdoch's organisation exploits these differences frequently, using a system of intra-company loans — so subsidiaries operating in high tax regions pay interest, which can be set against tax, on those loans, while the subsidiary which receives the interest is based in a region where the tax take is minimal.



Murdoch . . . 'So much to spend money on . . . that giving extra to the tax man is seen as a waste' PHOTOGRAPH: TONY ANDREWS

Other companies do the same, but News Corporation takes an approach which is more dynamic than most of its peers. That is how the group manages to undercut the 15 per cent rate of withholding tax — a global tax agreement specifically designed to stop corporations declaring profits in low tax zones if they are earned elsewhere.

James Capel's Terry Povey, one of the top Murdoch analysts, says: "News Corp succeeds in moving money around. Interest is paid in high tax jurisdictions and profits are collected in low tax jurisdictions. Inter-company transactions are of a sufficient scale to be able to make this meaningful.

"To achieve such miraculously low effective rates, News Corp has to continue a high level of spending in new businesses, start-ups and on capital expenditure — and all in areas where it can group the costs for tax purposes with income."

Until now, News Corporation has sought through a complex corporate structure and clever financing to ensure that if losses are incurred in a low tax region, they are shuffled — often through its system of loans — to another group subsidiary in a higher tax domicile.

This creates the bizarre spectacle of some tiny subsidiaries with enormous inter-company debts. A Guardian investigation has revealed that a company called Canterpath Limited, a $150 enterprise whose purpose is described as "the provision of finance to other group companies" was owed $2.3 billion by fellow subsidiaries at the end of the last financial year.

Canterpath also owes huge sums to other News Corporation units. The company had been due to repay $2.3 billion of borrowings last month but that has been rolled over and increased so that Canterpath has three years in which to repay $3.2 billion — making it probably the world's most highly geared company. Last year the tiny Canterpath made a loss of $2.8 million.

News Corporation has discovered another form of apparent tax saving which accounts for a large and growing proportion of the difference between what you could expect to see handed over to the exchequers around the world and what actually leaves the group's bank account.

This is described as "capital profits not taxable" in the group's filing with America's financial regulator, the Securities Exchange Commission.

In the past three years, these savings have grown from A$3 million to to A$122 million, more than a third of the total saving. Capital profits, such as the sale of assets, buildings or machinery, are generally taxed at a lower rate than trading profits. In some cases, such gains can be tax-free.

But the growing savings from untaxed capital profits have raised questions about News Corporation's profits as well as its tax bill.

There is no suggestion that News Corporation fails to comply with accounting standards which dictate how accounts are prepared and presented. But the differences between those standards and the tax rules explain why News Corporation appears to pay such a low proportion of profit to its host governments.

But the question beginning to worry some observers is how much longer the tax show can be kept on the road. Mr Povey said: "Long term, the very size of News has to make it ever harder to shelter such a high percentage of income and when this occurs net profits will take a major hit. The alternative to this is that News is able to be forever expansionist (and on a growing scale) endlessly engaged in major greenfield projects, the losses from which are moved around the profit centres by intra-group lending."

Although shareholders in News Corporation have benefited handsomely in recent years, they are not Mr Murdoch's main motive. He is creating an empire — a large minority of which is controlled by him and his immediate family.

He needs to create capital value and has no intention of giving the taxman today the inheritance he is building for his heirs tomorrow.

● Mr Murdoch last week became America's most powerful television mogul by paying $2.5 billion for the New World Communications Group. He will now reach 40 per cent of homes in America through New World's 10 television stations, all affiliates of his News Corp's Fox television.

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Tax break

News Corporation's tax record, A$m, 1990-95

Pre-tax total
Tax due at normal Australian rate
Tax payable by News Corporation

1,200 · 900 · 600 · 300 · 0

1990 · 1991 · 1992 · 1993 · 1994 · 1995

Financial years

Total 1990-95

4,974

1,760

604

Move to curb cream-offs

TAX authorities are making great efforts to meet the threat of multinationals switching profits around the world perfectly legally. The Australian government has moved recently to stop its companies claiming losses from foreign subsidiaries.

"The rules are getting a lot tighter," said David Cruikshank, head of the London tax practice for accountants Deloitte and Touche. "Many of the financial structures set up over the past decade will no longer be effective."

His counterpart at Price Waterhouse, John Whiting, said: "We are operating against a background of aggressive fiscal authorities."

A couple of years ago a US-Dutch treaty ended one profitable route to low taxes. It stopped a system whereby it was possible to receive interest income from a Netherlands company and pass it on to another subsidiary in the Netherlands Antilles without the tax authorities getting any more than a sniff at the profits. Yet at the same time the cost of the interest could be deducted from profits in the US.

Similarly, last year's British Budget introduced tough rules affecting foreign subsidiaries in places such as the Cayman Islands, which now makes it virtually pointless moving profits to such companies.

FOREIGN EXCHANGES

	Sterling rates July 22	Sterling rates July 15
Australia	1.9589-1.9610	1.9502-1.9520
Austria	16.20-16.21	16.56-16.57
Belgium	47.46-47.50	48.46-48.52
Canada	2.1189-2.1207	2.1238-2.1250
Denmark	8.88-8.89	9.07-9.08
France	7.79-7.80	7.97-7.98
Germany	2.3026-2.3044	2.3537-2.3554
Hong Kong	11.98-11.99	11.99-12.00
Ireland	0.9619-0.9634	0.9726-0.9742
Italy	2,334-2,337	2,383-2,386
Japan	166.80-167.03	171.01-171.14
Netherlands	2.5846-2.5885	2.6425-2.6446
New Zealand	2.2279-2.2305	2.2607-2.2631
Norway	9.89-9.91	10.07-10.08
Portugal	236.76-236.98	241.95-242.17
Spain	194.49-194.72	198.23-198.64
Sweden	10.21-10.23	10.43-10.45
Switzerland	1.8727-1.8750	1.9433-1.9451
USA	1.5496-1.5502	1.5507-1.5514
ECU	1.2202-1.2213	1.2452-1.2463

FTSE 100 Share Index down 17.0 at 3661.3. FTSE 250 Index down 60.5 at 4231.0. Gold up $1.25 at $384.50.

Keeping One Step Ahead of Terrorists

R. Jeffrey Smith

AIRLINE security officials have a recurring nightmare that goes something like this: A nondescript passenger boards a large aircraft. He is carrying entirely unremarkable personal items — nothing metallic and suspicious-looking, no bundles of wires, sharp objects or extraordinary electronic gear. The passenger passes uneventfully through airport screening devices, as does all his or her luggage.

The passenger does nothing untoward during the flight and deplanes quietly when it lands at the first stop. Then, on the next leg of the flight, a small bomb the passenger has hidden somewhere on the aircraft detonates at a carefully chosen moment and triggers a broader explosion that rips apart the fuselage.

Unfortunately, this scenario — of a terrorist able to elude most, if not all, of the airport safety precautions — is not a glimpse of the future, but of the present. An explosion of this type, albeit smaller and not as deadly, occurred on a flight from Japan to the Philippines in December 1994, and a dozen more such bombings were narrowly averted in early 1995 when those behind the scheme accidentally alerted police to their preparations, according to information being disclosed in a New York city courtroom.

Investigators probing last week's explosion and crash of TWA Flight 800 shortly after its takeoff in New York have not determined whether a bomb provoked the disaster, and have found nothing so far that suggests ill motives on the part of anyone who boarded the aircraft. But the possibility nonetheless is being taken seriously, partly due to a growing fear that in the cat-and-mouse game between bombers and airline security professionals, the bombers may be getting an edge.

One reason has been the emergence of a sophisticated breed of international terrorist who forswears the pipe bombs and crude clock-timing devices that contemporary airport security devices were designed to detect. The new terrorists favor smaller and much less detectable plastic or liquid explosives detonated by miniaturized and benign-looking timers, yet still capable of wreaking substantial destruction.

Against this threat, the challenge for security authorities literally is to find a needle in a haystack: one of the handful of bombs that might be placed aboard an aircraft amid more than a billion pieces of stored luggage and an undetermined number of carry-on items each year. The problem, as a National Research Council report on airport safety concluded dolefully in 1993, is that "a sophisticated terrorist can adjust his strategy more quickly than can the opposing security system."

The modern era of aircraft bombings was probably inaugurated in December 1988, when a plastic explosive planted in a Toshiba radio hidden in an unaccompanied suitcase blew up Pan Am Flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland, killing all 259 people aboard. That disaster prompted airlines to toughen their procedures for screening passengers and luggage, as well as require that all baggage be accompanied. It also made the U.S. government accelerate work on a new generation of inspection devices capable of ferreting out such plastic explosives.

But these new machines so far have been deployed at only eight airports around the world, including those in Atlanta, San Francisco, Tel Aviv, Brussels, London, and Tokyo. Neither of the two airports transited by TWA Flight 800, in Athens and New York, have them, and no federal rule requires their installation in domestic airports.

1994 spelled the beginning of what some experts fear might be a resurgence of such terrorism, this time involving persons with more advanced bomb-making skills who knew how to defeat even the best airport security devices.



Classmates grieve at Montoursville High School, which is thought to have lost 16 students in the TWA disaster PHOTO CISCO ADLER

Three Middle Eastern men — Abdul Hakim Murad, Wali Khan Amin Shah, and Ramzi Ahmed Yousef — who are on trial in New York City on 13 conspiracy and explosives charges, epitomize a new class of high-tech bombers with an international reach and an extraordinarily fervent, anti-U.S. bent, according to U.S. law enforcement officials.

Yousef is already known for his alleged role as the principal buyer of materials used in the 1994 bombing of the World Trade Center. Less well-known are the details of his alleged plot to join the other two in blowing up a dozen U.S. jumbo jetliners carrying 4,000 people in January 1995.

The impressive workings of the bombs these men were making for that purpose are spelled out in Murad's confession and in documents retrieved from the hard drive of a portable computer allegedly owned by Yousef.

"These are the type of things that are constantly upping the ante on staying ahead of the potential bomb-making capability of a terrorist," said Edward Badolato, a former assistant secretary of energy who chairs the National Cargo Security Council, an industry group that worries about transportation security.

Badolato said that besides using materials that are increasingly hard to detect, bombers from different ideological causes appear to be sharing some of the tricks of their trade with each other, helping to spread knowledge of advanced technologies.

Rangoon Beyond The Pale

EDITORIAL

ON JUNE 22, James Nichols, 65, died in a Burmese prison. His crime — for which he had been jailed for six weeks, deprived of needed heart medication and perhaps tortured with sleep deprivation — was ownership of a fax machine. His true sin, in the eyes of the military dictators who are running the beautiful and resource-rich country of Burma into the ground, was friendship with Aung San Suu Kyi, the courageous woman who won an overwhelming victory in democratic elections six years ago but has been denied power ever since.

Nichols's story is not unusual. The regime has imprisoned hundreds of democracy activists and press-ganged thousands of children and adults into slave labor. It squanders huge sums on arms from China while leading the world in heroin exports. But because Nichols had served as consul for Switzerland and three Scandinavian countries, his death or murder attracted more attention in Europe.

The European Parliament condemned the regime and called for its economic and diplomatic isolation, to include a cutoff of trade and investment. Two European breweries, Carlsberg and Heineken, have said they will pull out of Burma. And a leading Danish pension fund sold off its holdings in Total, a French company that with the U.S. firm Unocal is the biggest foreign investor.

These developments undercut those who have said the United States should not support democracy in Burma because it would be acting alone. In fact, strong U.S. action could resonate and spur greater solidarity in favor of Nobel peace laureate Suu Kyi and her rightful government. Already, the Burmese currency has been tumbling, reflecting nervousness about the regime's stability and the potential effects of a Western boycott.

The United States has banned aid and multilateral loans to the regime, but the junta still refuses to begin a dialogue with Suu Kyi. Now there is an opportunity to send a stronger message. The Senate is this week scheduled to consider a pro-sanctions bill.

Secretary of State Warren Christopher, who is due to meet this week with counterparts from Burma's neighbors, should challenge them to take stronger measures, since their policy of "constructive engagement" has so clearly failed.

In a video smuggled out, she called for "the kind of sanctions that will make it quite clear that economic change in Burma is not possible without political change." The world responded to similar calls from Nelson Mandela and Lech Walesa. In memory of Nichols and his many unnamed compatriots, it should do no less now.

Chernomyrdin: Russia's Coming Man

COMMENT
Jim Hoagland

A FLURRY of American concern and pique greeted Boris Yeltsin's abrupt 24-hour postponement of a meeting with Vice President Gore in Moscow last week. These reactions were exaggerated: Gore had already accomplished the important part of his mission in Moscow in meetings with the man who is at the moment Russia's key politician — Viktor Chernomyrdin.

It is difficult to let go of Battling Boris as the focal point of Russia's future, difficult not to take every hiccup on the president's health chart as the thunderclap of disaster.

But the election ushers in a new political moment for the Russian nation, which must now address the pressing economic and structural problems that the election campaign obscured, put off or exacerbated. Yeltsin, healthy or not, moves into the background in this period, which will be managed by his prime minister, the controversial and consistently underrated Chernomyrdin.

Russia's future now hinges on a struggle for economic power and influence unleashed by the election. Yeltsin's victory sets a framework in which Russian entrepreneurs and scientists, and foreign investors, will make decisions — and fortunes — that will accelerate the fragmentation of official and political power that is, happily, already occurring.

The most important part of the postelection economic struggle swirls around Chernomyrdin's official policy-setting position in the Kremlin and his unofficial but clear role as the godfather of Gazprom, Russia's giant natural gas monopoly, and the country's other energy companies.

Yeltsin's re-election campaign owed much to Chernomyrdin and his ability to manipulate the massive cash flow and work force of Gazprom, which he headed before becoming prime minister. Yeltsin in victory immediately reconfirmed the wily Chernomyrdin, who had convinced his rivals and others that he would be stepping down after the election.

Russia's oil and gas exports — and the revenues they raise — are also a magnet for those foreigners with the confidence and steady nerves needed to do business in a Russia that still lacks a clear, binding business legal code. Yeltsin's victory clears the way for Gazprom to push into new areas and expand its power to shape the entire Russian economy, Chernomyrdin's supporters and opponents alike predict.

Gazcom, a new Gazprom subsidiary, is set to enter the global satellite communications sweepstakes through a multibillion deal with the U.S. firm Loral Space & Communications, according to a report passed on to me by an industry analyst. The deal, if consummated, has big international implications: Loral would effectively shift its satellite launching business away from China to Russia.

The domestic implications for Russia are at least as important. The nature of Russian capitalism is being defined in such deals, says with alarm Alexander Lebed, the former general and presidential candidate who is now Yeltsin's national security adviser and Chernomyrdin's chief rival for power.

Lebed wants to thwart business deals that would lead to technology transfer out of Russia and lessen state control in key sectors. Satellite manufacturing and launching appear to figure prominently on Lebed's list of those parts of the old Soviet military industrial complex that must be protected. The proposed Loral deal could become an early test between the two men, and the larger forces they represent.

Events and Yeltsin have given Chernomyrdin a chance to play a giant role. But in return he must produce a functioning effective economy, and soon.

U.S. Ignores Panama Leader's Drug Links

Douglas Farah in Panama City

THE developments had a familiar and ominous ring to them: the president of a key U.S. ally taking money from a Colombian drug trafficker for his electoral campaign, with several close associates involved in a failed bank tied to money-laundering activities.

But since President Ernesto Perez Balladares admitted last month that his 1994 campaign unwittingly took $51,000 from Colombian drug-trafficking suspect José Castrillon Henao, there has been no move by the United States to ostracize him.

The U.S. attitude toward Perez Balladares is in stark contrast to its attitude toward Colombian President Ernesto Samper, whom the United States has publicly sanctioned, canceling his U.S. visa because of allegations that he knowingly took millions of dollars from the Cali cocaine cartel.

As in Colombia, the issue of drug trafficking in Panama is of particular concern to Washington. But recent history makes it even more sensitive. In December 1989, the United States invaded Panama to oust Gen. Manuel Antonio Noriega, now in prison in the United States after being convicted of drug trafficking.

Perez Balladares, who won a narrow victory in 1994, is the leader of Noriega's party. And the State Department maintains that billions of dollars in drug money are still being laundered through Panama's largely unregulated banking system.

Two important factors underlie the sharp difference in U.S. treatment of Panama and Colombia, according to U.S. and Panamanian officials.

The first, U.S. officials say, is that, unlike Samper's alleged links to the Cali cartel, there is no indication of a long-standing relationship between Perez Balladares and drug-trafficking organizations. U.S. officials said that, despite the donations and the checkered pasts of some of his associates, Perez Balladares has taken unprecedented action to crack down on drug trafficking and money laundering here.



Fired up: Students protest in Panama City last week against possible plans to allow U.S. troops to stay beyond 2000, the deadline for the U.S. to hand over the Canal and its military bases PHOTO: JON MITCHELL

During Samper's term, six of the top seven Cali cartel drug lords have been arrested or killed by police. The president demands credit for dismantling the cartel, but U.S. officials say the Colombian police succeeded in spite of Samper, not because of his leadership.

"The last thing we needed was the 'Samperization' of Perez Balladares in Panama," said a senior U.S. official. "And the difference is that Perez Balladares was open about what happened; he arrested and kept Castrillon in jail, and there is no evidence of any favors exchanged. That is the key difference with Samper, at least from the position of the United States."

But U.S. and Panamanian officials privately acknowledge there is another factor influencing the difference in treatment: It would be a tremendous embarrassment to the United States to face a serious drug scandal in a country that U.S. forces invaded more than six years ago to get rid of the very same problem.

"Have things changed? Somewhat," said one Panamanian banker. "Have they changed enough so the United States can say there is no problem here, the scandal is over? No. But that would be to admit the invasion did not do its job."

The scandal in Panama erupted at a particularly sensitive time in its relations with the United States. Under the 1977 Panama Canal treaties, the United States is to turn over to Panama complete control of the Panama Canal and the surrounding complex of U.S. military bases, airfields and intelligence-gathering facilities on December 31, 1999.

But for the past 10 months, both sides have been discreetly exploring the possibility of maintaining some type of U.S. presence beyond that time, largely to serve as a base in the regional fight against drug trafficking. While chances of reaching an agreement seem slim, some in the Clinton administration are pushing hard to try to make a deal.

In an interview last week, Perez Balladares said the latest scandal has not hurt his relationship with the United States, which he said knows him "backwards and forwards." "They have been very supportive of me," the president said. "They have had private and public statements that I appreciate very much, and they came at the right time."

After initially denying reports that Castrillon had contributed money to his campaign, Perez Balladares held a news conference last month to announce that, in fact, a review of his campaign ledgers had turned up two checks from Castrillon.

The checks totaled $51,000 in a campaign the president said cost about $2.7 million. Castrillon was arrested in April and awaits trial on charges of acting as a vital link in the Cali cartel's money-laundering operations. Castrillon is one of the first important traffickers arrested here.

The arrest "may be nothing in the war, but for us it was a very, very important effort," the president said. "What favor could he have wanted [for his contribution]? He is in jail — not only a jail, but a horrible jail."

U.S. officials said Perez Balladares gave another, important sign he is willing to crack down on drug traffickers. They said that when they raised concerns about Mayor Alfredo Aleman, a close friend of Perez Balladares and key fund-raiser who was named head of the central bank, the president removed him from the government.

Aleman, who has denied any wrongdoing, was a major stockholder in Trans Latin Air, an air cargo company that was indicted in Chicago in May 1994. The indictment alleges TLA was a front company for Colombian drug traffickers to "transport illegal narcotics."

U.S. officials warned that Panama's certification as fully cooperating in the counter-narcotics efforts would be seriously jeopardized if Aleman stayed on. The warning came early last year, and Aleman resigned.

Aleman also was the vice president of a bank that collapsed in March with millions of dollars missing. U.S. authorities alleged that the Banco Agro Industrial y Comercial was involved in laundering millions of dollars in drug money. Banaico was where Castrillon did much of his banking. When the bank collapsed, he had $2.9 million deposited there.

But some U.S. officials remain cautious about Panama. Aleman traveled to Europe with the president after resigning, and he has retained easy access to the president, according to political sources here.

"We don't think the president is drug-corrupted like Noriega or even Samper, at all," a senior U.S. official said. "And his behavior in the past month has been exemplary. But maybe we are being naive."

No Sex Please If You Are on Welfare

OPINION
Ellen Goodman

I SUPPOSE you could say that Amanda Smisek got off easy. After all, when Agnes Taylor gave birth out of wedlock she got 12 lashes "in the Publicke Vew of the People." All Amanda got was a suspended sentence and a $10 fine.

Of course Agnes lived in 17th-century Maryland and Amanda in 20th-century Idaho. But under the rule of Gem County prosecutor Douglas Varie, it's getting harder to tell the difference. This rural county has dusted off a 1921 law making sex out of wedlock a crime. They have begun using it as a weapon in the war against teen-age pregnancy.

Amanda was seven months along when a note was brought to her high school classroom in Emmett asking her to go down to the city police station and talk to a detective. Amanda had no idea that she, like a half-dozen other unwed teen-age parents-to-be — including her boyfriend — would be found guilty of "fornication."

Now, however, the resurrection of Idaho Code 19-6603 has become a signal of where we are headed in a desperate attempt to do something, anything, about teen-age pregnancy. Back where we started from.

When the laws against fornication were established, sex outside of marriage was considered a crime against the community morals. The only difference is that today it's being used to prosecute a crime against the community coffers.

Would Amanda and the other teens have been arrested just for "fornicating"? Of course not. A full 76 percent of females have sex while they are teen-agers. The average American today starts having sex eight years before marriage.

Would Amanda have been arrested if she had chosen to have an abortion? Surely not. Though that choice isn't easy in a state that had nine abortion providers at last count. Would she have been prosecuted if she had money to pay for her own medical care? Unlikely. According to newspaper reports, Amanda and most of the others were arrested after they applied for state assistance.

If "fornication" were a crime applied evenhandedly, the Gem County Courthouse would be a very busy place in a rather empty town. But this story is less about sex than about money.

I have no doubt that 16-year-old girls like Amanda are too young to be mothers. Too young for themselves. Too young for their babies. But the latest rash of public policies being randomly tested seem less concerned with their immaturity than with their poverty.

Consider the statutory rape laws also being dusted off in places from Montana to California. How many of them are truly focused on coercion, the exploitation of young girls by older men? And how many on welfare costs?

Kristin Lukar, who has written about the politics of teen-age pregnancy in Dubious Conceptions, offers up another histotic warning about "the symbolic use of these archaic laws to demonize and punish the poor." "We've done dreadful things to young women because they seemed to be a threat," she says. "What's toxic about teen-age pregnancy is that it combines a threat to the public purse with a threat to morality."

Amanda Smisek and her baby are living at home now with her single mother, Jody, a woman who brings home about $700 a month. Amanda's boyfriend, who has been in and out of foster care, is living in a Boise shelter. But Gem County has done one thing for Tyler's parents: It's given them each a rap sheet.

A Helms-Burton Waiver

EDITORIAL

PRESIDENT Clinton did half the right thing last week with respect to anti-Cuba sanctions. The actions in question concern the Helms-Burton Act, which Congress passed earlier this year. Popular as it is with many Cuban Americans, this was bad, and possibly unconstitutional, legislation, and the administration opposed it until Fidel Castro's Cuba shot down two unarmed airplanes over its airspace in February.

Some aspects of the law have come into force already. The U.S. trade embargo of Cuba, for example, until now a matter of executive discretion, was codified into law. Canadian and European executives of companies that invest in property formerly owned by Americans in Cuba may be denied entry visas to the United States.

But the truly noxious portion of the bill is Title III, the subject of last week's presidential action. This provision would give Americans who once owned property in Cuba the right to sue in U.S. courts any foreign company that "traffics" in that property. It extends this right to Cubans who became U.S. citizens long after they lost property — a privilege not accorded Poles, Germans or others who lost property in revolutions around the world and then came here. It seeks to punish the companies of allied nations that have followed recognized international law.

President Clinton could have waived Title III last week, but unfortunately chose not to do so. But he did waive, for six months, the right to bring suit under the title.

The real question is what best will hasten democratization in Cuba. Helms-Burton proponents say that isolation is the way. Opponents argue that foreign investment can promote capitalism and space for political opposition.

The Clinton administration says it will use the threat of Title III to persuade other nations to help pressure Castro or, at least, to invest in the right way — following a code of conduct that helps Cubans more than it bolsters their dictator. This is perhaps the best that could have been salvaged from a bad bill. It remains to be seen how eager U.S. allies will be to cooperate with a loaded gun held to their head.

Ghana's Gold Fails to Glisten for All

Cindy Shiner in Obuasi

JUST BEYOND the yellow "no trespassing" sign, a burly fellow who calls himself Jangu-man stood ankle deep in chemical-laced black muck. He scooped some into a wooden gutter with a dented old army helmet and washed it, letting promising particles gather into a porous brown cloth.

Quicksand-like pits have claimed the lives of at least five young men working in the moonscape around the Obuasi gold fields this year, and security forces have killed three and arrested 17 others. But Jangu-man, whose name means "wild one," displayed the confidence of a giddy gambler with nothing left to lose, someone for whom the lure of gold was stronger than the fear of getting shot.

Working on the run-off from soil already processed with cyanide and arsenic at Ghana's leading industrial mine, Jangu-man is one of thousands of illegal gold miners who often risk their health and lives for a chance to strike it rich, or more often, to keep themselves fed.

The men gather around large-scale, licensed mining operations, living off what the big companies throw away or have not yet gotten to. Ghana, the former Gold Coast, is rapidly becoming a leading producer.

Its Ashanti Goldfields Co., the only West African company listed on the New York Stock Exchange, is the world's 10th biggest producer, with its annual yield growing in the past decade from 200 ounces to nearly 1 million.

Ashanti's expertise is being sought by Mali, Niger, Guinea, Ivory Coast, Burkina Faso and others that have watched Ghana's status soar in international circles that have often looked on West African governments with disdain for a historic reputation of mismanagement and corruption.

But fears are mounting over growing tension between illegal miners and mining companies in Ghana, as unemployed youths become more desperate to grab a piece of the wealth being extracted from around their villages.

Economic reforms inspired by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund have helped boost foreign investment here, but have also inspired resentment among local inhabitants.



Underground workers at the Ashanti mine enjoy wages above the national average in Ghana, but thousands of desperate illegal miners often risk their lives for a chance to strike it rich PHOTO: ABBAS

"There's no doubt that gold mining is precipitating a fairly steady increase in social tensions," a Western diplomat said. "This is not a trickle-down type of prospecting . . . You see some fancy cars around town, nice houses, but the lower 40 percent of the population is certainly no better off than they were a generation ago."

At least 1,000 illegal miners, known as *galamsey*, a local word that means "sell it quick," armed with blow guns, clubs, knives and machetes, last month attacked Ashanti security men who tried to run them off a particularly rich site.

The miners stole about 50,000 chickens from the company's poultry farm, ransacked buildings and injured three policemen.

"The whites, they are making all the money; the government must institute a law to employ the local inhabitants here," said Blay Marshall Wellington, a secondary school teacher in Tarkwa, a town south of Obuasi.

Gold extraction and processing has become increasingly mechanized and often requires the skills of an educated work force. Few local youths are qualified.

"Even if there are a lot of jobs, I'd do this because I find this work very lucrative," said Anthony Yeboah, 35. "Farming is too hard. With cocoa it is five to 10 years before you have a product."

The galamsey have been prospecting since Ashanti was established 100 years ago, though many earn little more than a few dollars a month after laboring six days a week, from sunrise to sunset, in tropical heat. Five galamsey died of carbon monoxide poisoning in March while trying to pump water from an underground trench.

In April, illegal miners ransacked a meteorological station for thermometers containing mercury — a toxic element they use with their bare hands to process the gold. Mercury can penetrate the skin to lodge in body tissue and bone and can seriously damage the nervous system.

In January, the military was called in to drive more than 4,000 galamsey from a forest reserve after they had cut 55 acres of trees in two months while prospecting.

The government of President Jerry Rawlings has boosted security at the mines and granted more concessions to individual miners, trying to balance between the development-boosting large-scale gold mining and appeasing the galamsey so they do not scare foreign investors.

Mining companies from South Africa, Australia, Canada and the United States that operate here often recruit their own security because many local police receive hush money from the galamsey.

Mining companies in Ghana routinely pay high compensation to communities displaced by surface mining. But the funds often end up lining the pockets of local chiefs and district assemblymen, not in the hands of the most needy.

"It is only the galamsey that have saved the situation" in many communities, said school principal E.K. Ayensu. "And now the mining companies are asking them to move away from the concessions."

Counting The Cost Of a Penny

Bill McAllister

THE PENNY is starting to burn a hole in Uncle Sam's pocket.

It is now costing the government more to make and distribute 13.5 billion pennies a year than the coins are worth, the General Accounting Office told Congress last week.

That's a reversal of what previous studies have shown and it was enough to prompt Rep. Michael N. Castle, R-Delaware, to predict that "this coin's days are numbered."

But Castle, chairman of the House banking subcommittee which oversees the nation's coinage, wasn't willing to advocate an end to the coins that have carried Abraham Lincoln's image for the past 87 years.

Indeed, no member of Congress has been willing to offer legislation that would end the coin venerated by Ben Franklin as the cornerstone of American thrift. "A penny saved is a penny earned," Franklin declared when the penny was new.

Last week Castle proclaimed: "The penny lives for another day; another hearing." The 50-minute hearing by his House banking subcommittee on domestic and international monetary policy was designed more to alert the public that their cheapest coin is becoming increasingly expensive to produce than to begin its funeral.

Thanks to inflation, the penny has become "more a symbol than a measure of purchasing power," Castle declared. Many people consider the coin a nuisance, leaving pennies on the ground or tossing them into penny dishes found beside many cash registers, the chairman said.

The GAO said it costs the government about .8 of a cent to make a penny, but when all production and distribution are added the total overall costs amounted to a negative of between $8.5 million and $9.2 million in 1994.

That assessment drew an immediate complaint from Mint Director Philip Diehl. In a letter made public at the hearing, Diehl blasted the GAO's methodology, declaring "the penny in fact remains profitable to the government by a significant margin."

Diehl conceded, nonetheless, that "the total profit produced by the penny is relatively small." He estimated the 1994 profit at $17.9 million to $26.6 million and said the GAO improperly calculated the Federal Reserve's costs of transporting billions of old pennies as well as the newly struck ones.

GAO officials acknowledged the $11.1 million the Fed spent hauling pennies to member banks was largely responsible for their assessment that the penny is a money loser. And they conceded their numbers do not provide an overwhelming argument for ending the penny.

A Death Sentence on Human Dignity

OPINION
Colman McCarthy

THIS MONTH marks the 20th anniversary of Gregg v. Georgia, the case in which the Supreme Court ruled that the death penalty is constitutional. By bullets, ropes, drugs, gases and electricity, more than 330 men, and one woman, have been killed by state governments, with over 3,000 more in cells awaiting their turn.

Recent events have provided both supporters and opponents of capital punishment arguments to claim their position is right.

Those favoring have Felker v. Turpin, the June 28 unanimous Supreme Court decision that upheld a section of the 1996 Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act limiting state prisoners' federal court appeals. The ruling hastens the end of what President Clinton, Sen. Orrin Hatch, R-Utah, and others see as undue *habeas corpus* delays. The Rehnquist court says it will use its power to grant appellate relief only in "exceptional circumstances."

This limit on judicial review gave standing to the thinking of such death penalty advocates as Pat Buchanan who calls federal judges "little dictators in black robes" and Bob Dole who claims that one of "the root causes of the crime explosion" is judges appointed by Bill Clinton. Dole voted for nearly all of them.

Opponents of capital punishment see the Felker ruling making the Effective Death Penalty Act only too effective. It has been federal appellate review that has found reversible constitutional errors in more than 40 percent of the capital cases brought to court by inmates lucky enough to have a skilled lawyer.

Since the 1970s, nearly 60 men have been freed from death row because their innocence was proven. Without federal *habeas* review of state-conducted trials, a large percentage of these death sentences would have been carried out. Under the new law, according to the American Civil Liberties Union, most of these cases would not have qualified for review.

On occasion, federal appellate judges aren't needed to free the innocent. College students will do. On July 2 three Illinois men imprisoned since 1978 for the murder of a young couple were freed in a Chicago courtroom. A fourth was cleared last month. Three Northwestern University journalism students, along with their professor and a private investigator, spent six months scouring court documents, checking out leads and uncovering new evidence. That, plus the results of DNA testing, released two men from death row and two others from long sentences.

After 20 years of the death penalty, both the number and pattern of wrongful convictions should have led Congress to pass a law giving more power to federal review courts, not less. Congress should have been prompted to double or triple the $20 million for federal post-conviction defender groups, not close the program.

Those favoring capital punishment have public emotion on their side, ones easily aroused. When the killer of Polly Klaas sat in a California court last month and made an obscene gesture to the slain child's family, a normal reaction is rage. Kill this scummy creature, it is said, as we did all the other fiends who forfeited their lives by taking life.

Death penalty opponents can't summon this kind of emotional power. They have mounds of documented proof that executions do not deter crime, are arbitrary, high cost, biased against blacks and poor people, occasionally kill the innocent, and have been abandoned by at least 40 nations since 1976.

But when a contemptuous child-killer gives the finger to the victim's loved ones, he gives it to all of society. It isn't a moment to reflect on the thought of former Justice William Brennan: "The most vile murder does not, in my view, release the state from the constitutional restraint on the destruction of human dignity."

City of Symbols Divided by Faith

John Ash

JERUSALEM
One City, Three Faiths
By Karen Armstrong
Knopf. 471pp. $30

AS KAREN ARMSTRONG'S splendid book reminds us, the history of rational solutions in Jerusalem is not a happy one. Take the example of Frederick II, German emperor and king of Sicily who arrived in the Holy Land in 1228 to do his duty as a crusader. He did so without much enthusiasm. He had a genuine admiration for Muslim culture and spoke fluent Arabic. He did not want a war. Nor did his Muslim counterpart, the equally civilized and tolerant al-Kamil, sultan of Egypt.

The two men immediately opened negotiations on the status of Jerusalem. Since its walls had been demolished the city had no strategic value, so Frederick suggested that the sultan would save himself a lot of trouble if he simply gave it back to the Christians. After some haggling al-Kamil agreed, only stipulating that the Muslims be allowed access to their shrines. Neither man seems to have been prepared for the furious reaction. They had made the elementary mistake of ignoring the city's symbolic status. Both were denounced as traitors and blasphemers, and when the exasperated emperor decided to quit the Holy Land, he was pelted with entrails and dung as he embarked on his ship. So much for reason and civilized values.

Most solutions to the problem of Jerusalem have been rather more drastic. Reading Armstrong's account one senses that the Romans tried to be reasonable in their treatment of the Jews, but felt that their efforts had been ill-rewarded. When the Zealots slaughtered 5,000 Roman soldiers in 66 A.D. imperial patience was exhausted. The result, four years later, was the total destruction of Jerusalem, which the Romans demolished stone by stone with the kind of thoroughness they usually devoted to the construction of roads and bridges.

The Christian "solution" also involved demolition, this time of a temple of Aphrodite beneath which a rock-cut tomb was discovered. Whether this was in actuality the tomb of Christ is anyone's guess, but Jerusalem was once again a holy place. Naturally this brought no benefits to the Jews, who were forbidden to enter the city. The gloating anti-semitism of the Church Triumphant was as short-sighted as it was repulsive. When the Arabs invaded Palestine in the seventh century the Jews welcomed these "sons of Ishmael" as liberators, and many actively assisted them.

In her account of the Arab capture of Jerusalem, Armstrong strikes a welcome blow against western prejudices, remarking that "If a respect for the previous occupants of the city is a sign of the integrity of monotheistic power, Islam began its long tenure in Jerusalem very well indeed." These were not the fanatics of legend. Once the city surrendered there was no killing or destruction of property, no desecration of churches and no attempt to impose Islam by force. Astonishing as this was, the Caliph Umar was only obeying the numerous injunctions in the Quran to respect "the people of the Book," namely Christians and Jews. He soon discovered how well the Christians had respected the Jewish holy places. He was appalled by the condition of the Temple Mount, which could only be reached by climbing over mounds of garbage.



Faith in the city . . . Armstrong offers an eminently sane account of the history of Jerusalem

During this first period of Muslim rule the city had its troubles, but for the most part, the three faiths managed to coexist, each having its own distinct quarters and places of worship. If the arrangement was imperfect, it was a lot better than what was to follow. The crusader sack of 1099 was a catastrophe. Muslims and Jews were mercilessly cut down. Many of the latter were burnt alive in their chief synagogue. On the Temple Mount the conquerors waded up to their knees in blood, and rejoiced at the horror. Five months later the streets were still littered with corpses and severed limbs. Relations between Christians and Muslims were permanently embittered, the anti-semitic strain in Christianity was reinforced, and for centuries the city remained a backwater.

In 1098 Jerusalem had nearly 100,000 inhabitants. In the immediate aftermath of the crusader sack, the population may have been less than one thousand, and recovery was slow. In the 16th century, during the reign of Suleiman the Magnificent, the population was still less than 14,000. Even in 1922 it still numbered only 62,600 people but by now the majority of them were Jewish. As to the Christians of Jerusalem, it has to be said that between the close of the 11th century and the present day they have brought nothing but shame on their religion. If victory did not bring out the best in them, neither did defeat. Under the Mamluks and the Ottomans they consistently outraged rational opinion, and defeated the best efforts of their Muslim governors. Copts and Armenians interrupted each other's ceremonies with jeers and catcalls, while the Latins and the Orthodox engaged in fistfights in the holy places.

Nineteenth-century visitors were often profoundly disillusioned, none more so than the great Zionist Theodore Herzl, who found only "reeking alleys" and "the musty deposits of two thousand years of inhumanity, intolerance and foulness." Today, of course, Jerusalem is once again one of the world's great cities. Yet it remains a city without a solution. Armstrong's eminently sane and patient account of its history is therefore essential reading for Jews, Christians and Muslims alike.

This is especially true of her final chapter, in which she brings all her scholarship to bear on the present status of the city. She judges the Israelis by the standard she has set for all previous conquerors of Jerusalem: "Since all three faiths insist on the absolute and sacred rights of the individual, the way that the victors treat their predecessors in the Holy City must test the sincerity of their ideals."

She concludes that the Israelis are far from the worst, but that they fall far short of the example of Caliph Umar. She could have gone further. If there are two religions that demand to be united in brotherly respect, they are surely Judaism and Islam. Their violent antagonism in this century is a horrible anomaly which must be corrected.

In the Kingdom of This World

Andrew Delbanco

ACTIVE FAITH
How Christians Are Changing the Soul Of American Politics
By Ralph Reed
Free Press. 311pp. $25

ONE OF THE liveliest moments in Ralph Reed's book about the history and future of the Christian Coalition is his account of a speech Dan Quayle delivered in a jammed hotel ballroom during the 1992 Republican convention in Houston. "Do we trust Bill Clinton?" asked Quayle as he tried to whip the crowd into a hear-and-answer frenzy.

"No!" the crowd shouted.

"Do we trust the media?"

"No," they bellowed, now getting into the rhythm of Quayle's cadence.

"Who do we trust?"

"Jesus!" came back the response. The answer clearly caught Quayle off guard, and for a split second he got a deer-in-the-headlights look. The answer he had clearly expected was "George Bush".

Borrowing the stunned-deer analogy from Quayle's liberal detractors, Reed pokes fun not only at the grammatically challenged Quayle (ask Johnny Carson, Dan — it's whom do you trust), but also at former president Bush. By 1992, Bush had angered many on the Christian right who had supported him four years earlier but who had never quite believed that he walked with Jesus. At a White House gathering in November 1989, Pat Robertson (Reed's mentor) stood up and taunted the White House director of personnel: "Isn't it interesting that you have no difficulty identifying evangelicals and their allies during the campaign, but you cannot find them after the election."

Reed tells the story of how the "Moral Majority" movement, which never got much beyond televangelical appeals, became a disciplined grassroots political organization called the Christian Coalition — of which Reed is now executive director. Timed to appear just as the presidential campaign gets under way, Active Faith is an implied warning that, if the Republicans under Bob Dole drift back to the "dry, austere language of accountants" — from which, according to Reed, evangelicals rescued them in 1980 — the Coalition might focus on local and congressional races and leave the contenders for the White House to their own devices.

In this sense, publication of this book is a political event. But it also purports to be an intellectual event — a serious essay about the relation between religion and politics in American history.

Although Reed holds a Ph.D. from Emory University, some of the history in this book is very strange. For example, in counseling today's "pro-life" activists against pushing for an immediate constitutional amendment banning abortion, Reed finds a lesson in the long crusade against alcohol. "The key to prohibition's ultimate triumph," he writes, "was the prohibitionists' willingness to move their agenda gradually and incrementally."

But is prohibition really a good precedent for those who want to criminalize abortion? Can a constitutional amendment that unleashed a wave of organized crime and lasted only 14 years before it was repealed be described as an "ultimate triumph"?

Reed is on stronger ground when examining the American past as a series of revivals beginning with the first Great Awakening of the 1740s, which fed the fires of revolution, to the abolitionist crusade that helped end slavery, to the Social Gospel movement that attacked urban poverty and vice. He proclaims his own "pro-family movement" to be nothing less than a fourth Great Awakening, led by true believers who are "people of faith first, Americans second, and Republicans or Democrats third."

Lest he seem just another pulpit-thumping fanatic who wants to smoke out heretics and restore the nation to Christian orthodoxy, Reed defines "people of faith" broadly to include "pro-family" Catholics and observant Jews. He's careful to say that during childhood he "attended more bar mitzvahs than baptisms." But I wonder how far his tolerance goes. Why, in his pantheon of dissidents, is there no place for Walt Whitman, who said 125 years ago just what Reed says today — that "at the core of democracy, finally, is the religious element"? Could it be that Whitman, if he were alive today, would be denounced by the Christian Coalition as a homosexual enemy of family values?

IN THE end, the question of whether a political movement is led by "people of faith" or by non-believers matters less than whether it promotes a free and fair society. It's easy to invoke heroes from the past as spiritual allies ("I draw much of my own inspiration" from King, Reed claims) and to rail against past evils like slavery and legal segregation. As for today's issues, what does Reed's fourth Great Awakening have to offer for dealing with persistent poverty, with our grotesque and growing income disparity, or with the whole looming question of how, in a global economy, American capitalism can remain both competitive and humane?

Active Faith is finally a collection of feel-good slogans — "pro-life," "pro-family," "Judeo-Christian values." It is the work of neither a thinker nor a zealot but of a media-adept child of the video age. (Reed likes to describe himself on the run with his cellular phone at his ear or pounding away on his laptop at 30,000 feet.)

Since some on the right have lately identified problems about which the left has been reticent — the loss of manufacturing jobs (Buchanan), the modishness of illegitimacy (Quayle), the acceptance of violence as a norm in mass entertainment (Dole) — it's disappointing that Reed, rather than offer a thoughtful program, simply echoes them with more sound-bite-sized phrases. With alarming plausibility, he says of liberalism that "as a well-spring of ideas for the nation's future, or as a source of intellectual energy and vitality, its glory days are over." But on the evidence of Active Faith, the same must be said of conservatism.

Where does this leave the great majority of Americans who have little interest in ideology and who keep their religious convictions private and out of the public sphere? It leaves them, I fear, without a party, and without much sense of hope.

Hungary's fast track to the free market

Yves-Michel Riols in Budapest

BUDAPEST'S Moscow Square is unusual in that it has not ditched its Stalinist title. It was also, until recently, one of the last places in the Hungarian capital not to have been taken over by fast-food joints. Now all that has changed: a McDonald's and a Burger King have opened opposite the tram lines that connect the uppercrust Buda district with the business area of Pest on the other side of the Danube.

Fast-food restaurants are merely the most visible sign of a process of "Westernisation" that began well before the fall of the communist regime six years ago. Today, three-quarters of Hungarian homes are privately owned. The number of telephones has doubled in five years. And the historic Budapest-Vienna axis has been symbolically restored with the opening of a motorway linking the two cities.

Once nicknamed "the jolliest barracks" in the eastern bloc, Hungary has lost no time in going over from "goulash communism" to "Coca-Cola capitalism", to quote a columnist on the daily Népszabadsag.

The process moved into top gear when a harsh austerity programme was implemented in March 1995 by Gyula Horn's government, a coalition — unparalleled in post-communist Europe — of Socialists (reformed communists) and their erstwhile enemies, the Free Democrats (liberals), whose ranks include leading former dissidents.

Sixteen months on, Hungary's economic prospects look good, but the people, not given to outbursts of enthusiasm at the best of times, remain glum.

Although wary of setting their sights too high since the trauma of 1956, Hungarians were cautiously optimistic when the switch to democracy began. Both the conservatives of the Democratic Forum, led by the late prime minister, Jozsef Antall, who was elected just after the fall of communism in 1990, and their Socialist successors, winners of the 1994 election, held out the promise of a painless transition.



All change . . . The tram lines that bisect Budapest have acquired some new fast-food neighbours

But with a coalition government, and hence no prospect of a "magic solution" being provided by political power switching from one party to another, the Hungarians seem to have lapsed back into their customary mood of gloom and doom.

Yet there is apparently little for them to be worried about. Since the implementation of the austerity programme, public finances have improved and stabilisation is well under way. The budget deficit is down from 9 to 5 per cent of GDP. In 1995, revenues from privatisation reached record levels, exports soared by 20 per cent, and foreign currency reserves doubled.

"Contrary to forecasts, Hungary has succeeded in balancing its budget and achieving growth of 2 per cent; and for the first time its debt burden has begun to ease," says Peter Bihari of Budapest Bank.

But the swingeing cuts have antagonised many people. The wage freeze, combined with a reduction in family allowances, the ending of certain types of free medical treatment and the introduction of school fees, resulted in a fall in average income of about 15 per cent in 1995.

And belts will need to be tightened even further. The government has begun to implement reforms in areas such as education, social security and pensions. The draft 1997 budget plans to shed a further 42,000 or so public sector jobs. And earlier this month parliament decided to reduce the number of hospital beds by 10,000 and gradually take the retiring age up to 62.

Those moves, coming on top of high unemployment (10.6 per cent), high inflation (22 per cent) and widening social disparities, mean that not all Hungarians are overjoyed when it is pointed out to them that more than two-thirds of GNP is now generated by the private sector, that the privatisation programme is virtually complete, and that their small country has achieved the feat of attracting $13 billion of inward investment — twice as much as Poland, and three times more than Russia. It has reached the point where Imre Szekeres, the leader of the Socialist group in parliament, has publicly expressed "concern" at rising poverty in Hungary. "It's not enough to be right, you also have to have the support of the population," he recently told the daily Magyar Hirlap.

The Socialist Party still tops the opinion polls. Support for the nationalist Jozsef Torgyan, leader of the Independent Smallholders' Party, has slumped in the past year as a result of his ill-judged outbursts. Meanwhile the moderate right seems unable to get over its 1994 defeat and is riven by internal disputes.

The popular Socialist member of parliament Ivan Vitanyi accepts that many Hungarians are fed up, but argues that things could have been worse: "There's no such thing as a 'good' economic programme given the situation we're in. But we could have been even tougher and shown no concern for the poorest elements of the population."

(July 16)

Japanese communists keep red flag flying

Philippe Pons in Tokyo

IT IS true that the Japanese Communist Party (JCP) is a minor force in parliament and has been marginalised by the former Socialists, who hope to survive the realignment of the conservative parties by making compromise after compromise. Yet the JCP seems to be the only party that the public does not hold in contempt.

Indeed, the JCP has even been making gains in both opinion-poll ratings and local elections. On July 8, a communist was elected mayor of Komae, a Tokyo suburb. It was the fourth communist victory at local elections within the space of a few months.

In February, the communists missed taking Kyoto by a whisker. In Okinawa they recently doubled the number of seats they have in the local assembly. Japan now has 54 communist town councils and almost 4,000 communist councillors.

According to a recent opinion poll published by Asahi Shimbun, the JCP enjoys the support of 9 per cent of the electorate in cities (11 per cent in Tokyo), and 6 per cent nationwide. Those figures contrast with the waning popularity of both the opposition New Progress Party (NPP) and the Social Democrats (formerly Socialists), who seem to be heading for disaster.

The communists' relative breakthrough has not gone unnoticed by the media. Their general secretary, Kazuo Shii, is now a regular guest on television talk shows.

With 15 seats out of 511 in the lower house of the Diet (parliament) and 15 out of 252 in its upper house, the JCP is not a political heavyweight. Yet many observers see it as wielding considerable influence. The communists offer a coherent and rather moderate platform, which contrasts sharply with the shenanigans that mar much of Japanese political life.

The JCP is now seeking to step up its co-operation with other political forces. This openness has meant it has been able to win over some of those who normally vote for independents. The mainstream parties, and in particular those claiming to be "reformist" are perceived to have let down the electorate.

"I don't think we've changed," says Tetsuzo Fuwa, president of the JCP's central committee presidium. "Our position has simply taken on a higher profile because of the crisis of democracy in Japan. The rallying of the Socialists to the government coalition and an opposition consisting of renegades from the former majority reflect the unchallenged domination of the conservative camp.

"We try to speak for the people, and we've won over some floating voters. Even if the Socialists leave the coalition, they have made too many compromises to be a true alternative."

The JCP is not even thinking of changing its name. "It would mean we were disowning our past. That's not the case. We're proud of our history. Mistakes were certainly made, but we're trying to reform the party," says Fuwa.

The JCP was outlawed immediately after its foundation in 1922, and its leaders spent almost 30 years in prison. One of them, Kenji Miyamoto, is still president of the central committee at the age of 87.

As long as Miyamoto, a sacrosanct figure, remains alive his party is unlikely to evolve along the same reformist lines as, say, the former Italian Communist Party — though it should be remembered that the Japanese communists broke with the Soviet Union and China in the 1960s, well before the emergence of "Euro-Communism".

But the JCP is bound to change. The new electoral system (a combination of majority voting and proportional lists) favours the two-party system. Whether the JCP gets the 20 seats it hopes for, it has shown in the past few months that it remains a repository of certain principles of Japanese democracy and has a vital role to play in political debate.

(July 17)

Mandela aims to keep France as a partner

Frédéric Chambon, Jacques de Barrin and **Serge Moati** interview South Africa's president

COULD you envisage a partnership with France to solve conflicts in Africa?

A partnership already exists. It was no coincidence that Francois Mitterrand was the first foreign head of state to visit my country after the first multiracial elections of April 1994. He gave us enormous material aid and opened European doors for us at a time when we were still on our own.

When I met President Chirac on Saturday, we discussed a great many issues, including the reorganisation of the UN Security Council and conflicts in Africa. I would stress that this wasn't the first time I'd met your president. I've already visited France three times since being released from prison, and on each occasion I've talked to him in his capacity as mayor of Paris. I sometimes pick up the telephone and call him. So there's already a vigorous partnership between us.

Why does South Africa seem so reluctant to help solve Africa's various conflicts?

We're not reluctant, but we have to take into account the existence of organisations whose job it is to solve many of those problems. I'd like to be able to act through the UN, the Southern Africa Development Community and the Organisation of African Unity. It wouldn't be right for any country to get involved outside those structures. But whenever we have been asked to help, we've responded immediately and unreservedly.

But doesn't the serious threat of war in Burundi force you to try to avert it?

We reacted to the situation in Burundi, in agreement with other African leaders and organisations. We also supplied humanitarian aid, chiefly medicines and food. But we're not prepared to go it alone.

What did you think of France's intervention in the Central African Republic in May?

I don't have all the data. I don't know what France's interests are there, or what it held against the government of the Central African Republic. So I can't take a firm position on the issue.

Does South Africa want substantial economic aid from France, and if so in what areas?

France has already invested 3 billion rands [$700 million] in South Africa, and an increasing number of French companies are setting up in business there. A country like France, which had a revolution to get rid of feudalism and has had a great influence throughout the world, should regard it as its duty to support us. A country that produced philosophers like Montesquieu and Voltaire must help us make the transition from tyranny to democracy.

(July 16)

Fanfares of a seasoned piano player

Jacques-Emmanuel Fousnaquer

HERE'S a poser: who composed music that combined the poetry of Franz Schubert and Johannes Brahms with Charles Ives's audacity, Maurice Ravel's sophistication and the moving power of Gustav Mahler's Des Knaben Wunderhorn, while remaining utterly individual?

The answer, surprisingly perhaps, is Percy Grainger (1882-1961) — at least on the evidence of Danny Boy, Songs & Dancing Ballads, a new CD from John Eliot Gardiner with the Monteverdi Choir and the English Country Gardens Orchestra (Philips 446 657-2). It shows that Grainger made a major and fascinating contribution to 20th century vocal music.

His piano compositions — an engagingly wayward collection of vignettes, recorded in their entirety by Martin Jones on five Nimbus CDs — are fairly well known. Much less is known about Grainger the pianist, who studied under Ferruccio Busoni and tirelessly championed Edvard Grieg's keyboard music. Despite being regarded by experts as one of the finest pianists of his time, he has since been consigned to oblivion.

It was Gardiner who last year revealed Grainger's astonishing symphonic work, The Warriors, a veritable orchestral whirlwind whose performance requires three conductors (DG 445 860-2).

Grainger was indeed an odd bird. After looking at his career in detail, his most knowledgeable biographer concludes soberly that he was "mad". Grainger was born in Australia, studied music in Germany, settled in England and became a naturalised American in 1918.

He spent his life knocking about from continent to continent, collecting hundreds of folk songs and launching into a host of educational and publishing projects, most of which came to nothing. He was an energetic man with a childish character and an unbridled sexual appetite.

But where Grainger differs from other great eccentrics of the early 20th century, such as Leopold Godowsky, Arthur Lourié, Henry Cowell and Kaikhosru Shapurji Sorabji, is that he did not leave to posterity the kind of forbidding and arcane *oeuvre* that puts off even the best-disposed music-lover.

His singularity went hand in hand with an insatiable musical curiosity. While Ives's musical experiments are now familiar, few people realise that Grainger too was a trail-blazer who adored polytonality and new timbres, and who loved to pep up his works with fanfares and folk tunes.

His choral music is nothing short of a revelation. It probably includes his finest work, though it has to be remembered that Gardiner's brilliant account of it on this disc is the result of a drastic whittling down of the 1,000-odd choral compositions and arrangements left by the composer.

It is difficult not to be won over by these simple, unsophisticated songs, which Grainger gingers up with jarring harmonies and weird combinations of instruments, and difficult not to be moved by the atmosphere of regret, bitterness or terror he somehow manages to instill into the most innocent of ballads.

Berio despairs of Italy's cultural decline

Sandro Cappelletto hears from Italy's greatest living composer why an opera house fire in Venice points to a deep malaise



Firefighters outside Venice's La Fenice opera house on January 29, when fire swept through it. Arsonists are thought to have been responsible for the blaze that destroyed the 204-year-old building

IT NOW seems certain that the fire which destroyed Venice's La Fenice opera house on January 29 was the work of arsonists. After forensic experts decided that the traces of inflammable liquid at the site were too numerous and too far from each other to be accidental, a Venetian magistrate, Felice Casson, started criminal investigations.

Luciano Berio, Italy's greatest living composer, takes a jaundiced view of the whole affair: "The only evidence of Italian unity today is the country's ability to inspire disgust." He points out that the burning down of La Fenice was not the first such event: Bari's Petruzzelli Theatre was destroyed by members of an organised criminal gang in 1991.

"If [the destruction of La Fenice] had taken place in Sicily or southern Italy, we'd say it was the Mafia or the Camorra," he says. "But in a place like Venice such an unthinkable act can only be the result of private vendettas or monstrous schemings. There are corrupting forces at work that are clearly out of control."

Three years ago, the Mafia planted bombs in various places, including in the Uffizi Gallery in Florence and in a Milan park.

"Such acts are symptomatic of the appalling process of cultural decline that has swept the country," says Berio. "No Frenchman would ever dream of planting a bomb in the Louvre or the Palais Garnier opera house. Certain symbols are repositories of our history: we are destroying them, we are allowing them to die.

"When I say decline, I refer to a material truth, an attitude that is now anchored in the minds and the conduct of many Italians. With a thing like corruption, you never know how far it can go.

"It is an open secret that certain Italian opera houses are run by people who don't like their jobs, who are incompetent and easily corrupted, or who themselves corrupt others — weak people who run theatres that cost the community too much compared with what it gets in return. This country has just escaped the danger of its whole cultural life being 'Berlusconised'.

"Italy has an extraordinary number of different cultural identities that have resulted from an equal number of unusual historical situations. And those situations have always been connected with a foreign presence. This has resulted in a kind of tension between the state and the nation, between government and citizens.

"For the first time since the end of fascism Italy now has a culture minister, Walter Veltroni, who is also deputy prime minister. The state and the nation must help each other to protect all our cultural resources, including music. The new government must face up to the urgent task of boosting our national self-respect and restoring a cultural pride that we seem to have lost.

"The nerve centres of art and beauty in Italy no longer seem to be interconnected by any conscious cultural link. Anyone who has received the slightest education will have learnt to respect beauty spontaneously . . . But I can only repeat that the decline has been taking place at a breathtaking pace in the past few years."

The Italian parliament has just approved a decree ordering the reconstruction of La Fenice. Berio is worried about the stipulation that the theatre should be rebuilt "as it was and where it was".

"I loved La Fenice. I often worked there, with people like Italo Calvino, Bruno Maderna and Edoardo Sanguinetti. It was there that I first met Stravinsky, on the occasion of the first performance of The Rake's Progress.

"It was the most beautiful theatre in the world. When the lights went down and the velvet took on its unique and unforgettable shade of pink again, one could feel a kind of universal intimacy taking hold of one. However, it strikes me as absurd to try to rebuild La Fenice as it was."

The leading architect Renzo Piano has already gone on record as saying he believes a photocopy-like reconstruction would be "phoney and impossible".

Berio hopes that the memory of what La Fenice was and what Italy has lost will eventually resolve itself in the building of a theatrical and cultural venue that is orientated towards the future. "That's the least one can do in a city which in 1860, with an extraordinary sense of what the future held in store, built the first opera house open to the public."

(July 5)

Festival with a difference at the abbey

Renaud Machart

IN THE 15 years that he has run the Académies Musicales de Saintes, the conductor Philippe Herreweghe has always been prepared to try out daring ideas and track down performers capable of putting them into practice. The only shortcoming of this music festival, held annually in the southwestern French town of Saintes, is that its Abbaye des Dames, a magnificent white-stoned abbey dating from the 11th century, is not the most suitable venues for concerts.

What the festival needs is a concert hall that is neither too small nor too big, and which has clear and warm acoustics. On July 7, for instance, a recital in the abbey by the young German-Swiss baritone Hanno Müller-Brachman left one a trifle disappointed. His voice seemed to be artificially amplified by the building's reverberant acoustics.

An opportunity to hear a recording of his recital, made by the sound engineer Guillaume Bourgeois, proved a big surprise: what had seemed overblown was no more than full-bodied, and his apparently soft-edged delivery was brought into focus.

Müller-Brachman will have to learn how to become less conscious of his fine, powerful voice and concentrate more closely on chapter and verse. But in his Schubert recital the 26-year-old singer displayed fundamental signs of maturity, such as accurate intonation, stylistic precision and a natural presence.

Jeff Cohen, the pianist who stood in at the last moment for Andreas Staier, revealed some startling pianistic details in his haughty, almost embittered rendering of Der Zwerg.

The following day, Véronique Gens gave a recital of songs by Reynaldo Hahn, Claude Debussy and Henri Duparc. Her impeccable style lent an unsuspected dignity to songs composed by Hahn in the "ancient" style, such as Quand Je Fus Pris au Pavillon and A Chloris.

Debussy's Chanson de Bilitis, which perfectly suited her tessitura, showed that Gens possesses exceptional colour in the lower-middle and low registers.

Duparc's songs, which Gens was tackling for the first time in a recital, were a good vehicle for her ample voice: she gave a transcendental performance of Extase, and filled the end of La Vie Antérieure with infinite melancholy and other-worldliness.

Just occasionally, during the delivery of loud high notes, her nostrils and eyebrows tensed up slightly and her sound became somewhat closed. She will now probably have to decide either to broaden her delivery, at the risk of spoiling her remarkable ability to sustain a vocal line, or else opt for the kind of tessitura that suits her wonderfully, in other words exploit her lower register.

Sandrine Piau seems to be at the start of a most promising career. On July 9, her rendering of "Amor", from Richard Strauss's Brentano Lieder Op 68, boded well for the role of Zerbinetta, in the same composer's Ariadne Auf Naxos, which she is due to sing shortly at the Rennes Opera House.

Piau tends to get carried away by the sound of her own voice, which is indeed dazzling and extraordinarily musicianly. The abbey, while not helping her diction, did enhance some magnificent long-held notes, particularly in Alban Berg's Early Songs which might almost have been written specially for her. At the keyboard of a 1911 Bechstein, Leo Van Doeselaar gave her voice a crystal-clear but sinewy accompaniment.

After the memorable Schumann and Brahms recital they had given at last year's festival, no one wanted to miss the joint recital by two young British singers, Sophie Daneman (who lives in France) and Ian Bostridge.

On July 10, accompanied by the extraordinary Julius Drake, they sang extensive extracts from Hugo Wolf's Spanisches Liederbuch. It is a mystery how they came to terms with this virtually unsingable, neurotic and expressively introverted music — or rather how they melted into Wolf's musical style without superimposing anything of themselves. If their performance was exceptionally moving, it was because they allowed themselves to forget their own magnificent voices.

(July 14/15)

Le Monde

Directeur: Jean-Marie Colombani

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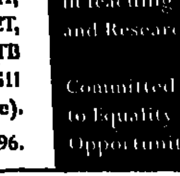


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Today's scientists are superstars whose lectures attract thousands and whose books sell in millions. It's hardly surprising, says **Tim Radford**: not only do they offer meaning to life in a post-religious age, but they also have incredible tales to tell

Astounding stories

RICHARD DAWKINS is nervous. This is very surprising. After all, he has done his homework: the topic for the evening is called Arguments By Design, which is itself a knowing play on the twist of natural philosophy that led indirectly to Darwin's theory of evolution, which is a subject that Professor Dawkins really does know a lot about. He wrote the book, his household is probably working on the T-shirt.

On top of that he has a number of confidence-bolstering things going for him: a brain the size of a small planet, a command of language that would make your average novelist squirm with envy, a chair at Oxford, and the fierce, hawkish good looks of a forties film star. He also has a gift for taking a single metaphor for a long walk through the Darwinian hinterland: check out titles like The Selfish Gene, River Out Of Eden, The Blind Watchmaker, and his latest, Climbing Mt Improbable. His books sell, and sell. He is married to Lalla Ward, an actress of whom people confess to having "had a thing" about when she was in Dr Who, and she is in the audience apparently enjoying being upstaged. Every seat in the theatre is sold, and there is a small knot at the box office hoping for returns.

Returns! For a 6pm conversation at a literary festival in Brighton, a conversation about the trickier bits of Darwinism! To cap it all, we have just been told that the all-star turn afterwards, the real literary event, in which three novelists were to talk about espionage thrillers, has been cancelled because *not one ticket has been sold.* All this, and the man is palpably and endearingly a bit nervous. The word is that he always is on edge at these things.

He need not have worried. When he speaks, the whole theatre strains forward to listen. When he stops talking, people seem to relax a little, as if to help them begin digesting the platefuls of pertinence washed down by beakers of brilliance. He serves up dazzling stuff about the evolution of spider's webs, stunning entertainments about symbiosis in the tropic reef systems, a glimpse of the surprisingly furious fisticuffs within the framework of Darwinism, and a look at the problems and challenges for scientific reductionism.

The conversation steers away from religion and the idea of a personal God: Professor Dawkins's view of religion as a virus that keeps erupting in epidemics, with huge consequent losses of life, is pretty well known, so there is no point in giving it another airing this time.

There are questions: the sharp, to-the-point questions of people who have been listening carefully: what is the difference, asks one, between symbiosis and parasitism? Ninety minutes fly by. When it is over, the applause explodes, and goes on until Dawkins leaves the stage. Almost immediately, the other ritual of a literary festival begins: people start queuing to buy copies of his books, and have them signed by him.

The begetter of a literary magazine says that the evening was well spent. "It was like watching the start of a new religion or something," he says. Or maybe just a cult. All over the place, there are gatherings of people gazing reverently at scientists, some of them almost levitating in fervour as they contemplate their own subjects. The philosopher Daniel Dennett in a recent book, announced that "if I were to give an award for the best single idea anyone has ever had, I'd give it to Darwin, ahead of Newton and Einstein and everyone else."

By everyone else he meant, it seems, Jesus, Socrates, Goethe, Homer, you know, those guys. Is it just a fad: science replaces comedy/poetry/you-name-it as the new rock 'n' roll? Or is it because the lads in the lab now have something amazing to say, and say it amazingly well? Sir David Attenborough has been a star for so long it's easy to forget he thinks of himself as a zoologist. It isn't just the biologists. The physicists, too, are heading for stardom. In Australia, the author and theoretical physicist Paul Davies draws 1,200 people at a time to a lecture. In the US, Carl Sagan, the astronomer, has been on the television chat show circuit for decades. George Smoot — don't ask for the fine details of what he saw in the cosmic background radiation, but he did remark at the time that it was like seeing God — reportedly walked away from his agent with a $2 million book contract.

Fame beckons everywhere. Stephen Jay Gould, the Harvard palaeontologist, has been a darling of the literary reviews for more than a decade. In Britain, Steven Rose, the Open University neuroscientist and agitprop man, has been a media don for almost as long as he has been a memory researcher. Steve Jones has for five years been the first scientist you think of when somebody mentions genetics.

Talking of which, Stephen Hawking must be, after Einstein, the best-known physicist of the century: he has been filling lecture halls for eight years. He just keeps expanding, like the cosmos, into ever bigger spaces. The last extravangaza choked the Albert Hall.



A point to make . . . Richard Dawkins serves up dazzling stuff

PHOTOGRAPH: MARTIN ARGLES

DAWKINS has been filling halls for years too. He is quite used to being a sell-out. "I find it very gratifying, that there does seem to be a group of people who are literate, keen on books, the kind of people who go to literary festivals, and who just flock to science events," he says.

The questions aren't always so respectful. Physicists are sometimes dogged by people convinced that Einstein (or Dirac, or Heisenberg) got it wrong. Biologists keep meeting the dwindling band who believe in the literal truth of the Bible. Dawkins doesn't mind.

"There are people who do seem to think they know it all. But they sort of liven it up a bit, I don't find it irritating. Usually what I try to do is treat the question in a constructive way, try to use it in such a way that I can give an answer that is illuminating to other people," he says.

That is his job these days. He is called the Charles Simonyi professor of the public understanding of science. This concept — the public understanding of science — is a new one. The scientific establishment dreamed it up a decade ago, when they discovered that (a) nobody knew what scientists were doing, (b) either nobody cared or they actually resented it, and (c) nobody wanted to learn science even at secondary school.

Dawkins notices "a curious dichotomy". The questions he gets, and the letters from the people who read his books, are all immensely encouraging. "On the other hand, you read figures about schoolchildren voting with their feet when it comes to deciding what to do at university, and flocking in droves away from science."

This is because science is seen as a miserably paid and insecure way to make a living. "That would explain why people might like to read law," says Dawkins. "But why English? It's wonderful to read English, but the very same people, for the very same motives, read English because they love literature and love beauty. Half of them could get that from science."

Or maybe from reading books about science. The Dawkins phenomenon is newer than the thing publishers long ago learned to call call the Hawking effect — that books about science really do sell if you push them. Britons have been reading elegantly written, graceful science for more than a century. Darwin's bulldog, Thomas Henry Huxley, wrote essays that are still models of style. Einstein's champion Sir Arthur Eddington wrote beautifully about the far cosmos more than five decades ago. J B S Haldane combined biology with columns for The Daily Worker before the second world war, and left a legacy of essays still in print, and one of the great lines ("The universe is not only queerer than we suppose, but it is queerer than we can suppose"). After a period in which books about science went out of fashion, Gould in the US and Hawking in Britain showed publishers a thing or two about sales and profits — and good reviews.

Nor is it surprising that science writing is consistent with good writing. Novelists depend on observation and description, but (for instance) field biologists mapping the 10 million, or 20 million, or 100 million distinct species on the planet — no one knows how many there may be — really depend on observation and description. This is one reason why, say, Edward O Wilson in his autobiography, Naturalist, writes stuff that makes the scalp prickle. Another reason is that clear writing and clear thinking are not separate skills: someone good at one tends to be good at the other, and physicists contemplating, say, the bizarre moment when time began, are likely to be good at thinking or they wouldn't have the job at all.

The story of science since the 18th century is astounding: the story of science since the sixties makes the practitioners blink, even though they were part of the action. Thirty-three years ago when the Beatles arrived, cosmology was a bit of a jokey subject. First there was speculation, went the joke, then wild speculation, then cosmology.

THAT WAS then. Now, theoretical physicists and quantum cosmologists are sure they have the whole 15 billion-year-story of creation cracked, except for the first billion-billionth of a second of time itself, which now occupies an era called the Very Early Universe, and which includes a bit called the Inflationary Era, in which space itself expanded far, far faster than the speed of light, creating the framework into which the present universe could, so to speak, fill itself in. In 1963, people talked vaguely of continents rising and falling and mountain ranges rising and buckling, and a fair number of geological heretics were prepared to bet that the continents had been floating round like scum on the ocean floor for 3.5 billion years, sundering and banging into each other like dodgem cars, but it sounded ridiculous. A compelling solution to the problem turned up in the year President Kennedy was shot: now geophysicists have an almost complete theory of the Earth and its history, and are homing in — for example — on the role of Tibet in creating the monsoons and frosting the Antarctic with ice instead of beech forests.

Then Nasa and the Pentagon had computers, huge things with tapes and cathode ray tubes that helped the arms race and the moon landings, but these monsters had less computing power than a modest handheld eighties calculator, and engineers still tended to rely on slide rules and pen and paper sums as well. By the end of the century, you should be able to buy a chip with the memory to hold War And Peace, multiplied a thousandfold.

Then — even then — steelmaking and other metallurgies were crafts or even black arts: now materials scientists lay down films of crystal a sheet of molecules at a time to make stuff with properties they can predict it will have.

Then people knew about the "double helix" of DNA which codes for all living things, but nobody seriously expected to be able to make sense of it. Now people look at the DNA of tiny, short-lived creatures and use them to "read" the code in humans. This summer, European scientists started puzzling over the human breast cancer gene, and the rectal cancer gene, both found in yeast, and US scientists picked up the human skin cancer gene in a study of a fruit fly.

Thirty years ago, biologists used to talk about life as if it were all related because that was the logic of Darwinism; now the connectedness of things urges itself on them every day. If people are beginning to hang on to the words of scientists, it may be because the words add up to an astounding story, a kind of cosmic cliffhanger, with new twists all the time. Sometimes today's new twists reveal that yesterday's version of the story was wrong. Dawkins takes that calmly too. Lots of things in biology and physics have, in the past, proved to be wrong. But there are some certainties. "We can say with absolute confidence that evolution is right, that DNA is a double helix — that's not going to change, it is not going to be an approximation to some more profound truth we will get later on," he says.

Paul Davies, the theoretical physicist based in Adelaide, has a string of successful books and a sometimes disconcerting celebrity status. He too is used to crowded audiences. He, like Dawkins, warns against scientism: the belief that a man in a white coat will adopt the priestly function and give you something new and sure to believe in. Dawkins doesn't care for the religion parallel at all: Davies accepts that it is there anyway. He too sees a real danger of treating science as a latter-day religion. It is not, he says. And scientists are not high priests with answers to the ethical and moral problems of society. He says: "I believe that even in this post-religious age, ordinary people are still seeking for some deeper meaning to their lives, and they see science — correctly in my opinion — as providing a possible path to round out the context of their lives."

Call for Romans to settle Mussolini's scores

Alice Martin in Addis Ababa says pressure is growing on Italians to return Ethiopia's pride

THE elderly tour guide was adamant. "Please, you must be a true witness. This obelisk has to be returned to Aksum where it belongs. It is our own. It was made here by our ancestors and it tells how strong and clever they were."

No one knows when Axumites first began erecting obelisks, and no one knows how many there are — at the last count it was more than 1,300 — but they are Berhane Meskal Zelelo's whole world, and he has been showing them to tourists for 40 years.

They are, says Elias Girmas of the Tigray bureau of culture, "pagan monuments". The three most beautiful ones were carved shortly before the Axumite kingdom converted to Christianity in the fourth century. They were cut from single slabs of stone and transported several miles before being erected over the tombs of kings.

They were records of the wealth and might of the kings who ruled over a trading state that stretched as far as Yemen across the Red Sea.

In 1937 the finest of Aksum's three carved obelisks was looted by the invading Italian army under Mussolini.

During the five-year occupation, in which thousands died and much was looted, the Aksum obelisk was shipped to Rome and erected in front of Mussolini's short-lived ministry for Africa, now the site of the United Nations Food And Agriculture Organisation. And



The obelisk, captured by Mussolini in 1937, in Rome

there it has stayed, despite a UN peace treaty in 1947 which instructed Italy to "restore all works of art . . . and objects of historical value" removed from Ethiopia.

Its return, therefore, unlike that of many other works of art looted during the colonial period, is not just a moral issue: it is provided for in an international treaty. But through lack of political will on behalf of the Italians, nothing has been done about it.

Now Ethiopians are saying that time is up. The Return Our Obelisk Committee in Addis Ababa has 13,000 signatures on a petition demanding the obelisk's "immediate restitution", which it will present in due course to the Italian parliament.

Professor Richard Pankhurst, a member of the committee, believes that the time is ripe.

He said: "The recent elections in Italy have brought many anti-fascists to power who regard Mussolini, the looter of the Aksum obelisk, as their own oppressor as well as that of Ethiopians. And very recently the Italian under-secretary for foreign affairs, Rino Serri, made a clear statement saying, 'We will return the Aksum obelisk,' indicating that he wanted a decision not in years but in months."

The head of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church in Aksum, *Nuburaed* Belay, said: "It is not important for [it] to stay in Rome. It is not important to the Italian people, because it is not a sign of their civilisation and history. It is merely a sign that they grabbed it from here."

When asked why the Church felt so strongly about a pagan monument the *nuburaed* said: "We did not start Christianity without any foundation. In the same way as the Old Testament relates to the New Testament, this obelisk is part of our beginnings and it belongs in Aksum."

It is 100 years since the Ethiopians beat the Italians at the battle of Adwa, and 60 years since the Italian army's "revenge" on Ethiopia in its five-year occupation of the country. Now there is a feeling that it is time to settle old scores, and that means returning what belongs in Ethiopia.

Notes & Queries Joseph Harker

WHY is a cocktail so-called?

THE name originates from one vital component: the decoration. In previous centuries a mixed drink with a spirit base would have been adorned with feathers from the tail of a prize cockerel. — *Katheryn Smith, Doncaster, South Yorkshire*

WHEN food is served piping hot, who's piping — or where's the pipe?

PIES used to be baked with whistling pipes inserted into the crust. When the pressure of steam was sufficient the pie would "pipe", indicating that it was now cooked. These pipes were often shaped like birds, and the song "four and twenty blackbirds" probably referred to a pie so enormous that this number were needed. — *Steve Wilson, London*

WHEN a fly alights on a window pane, repeated taps and brushing from the other side rarely dislodge it. Is the fly unable to see through glass or is it ignoring the threat, realising that it cannot be harmed?

A FLY flees a swat because it senses the change in air pressure caused by a solid surface moving towards it. Hence fly swatters are mesh (instead of solid). Since the window shields the fly from the pressure of the swat, it remains blissfully unaware. — *Terry Siederer, Stockholm, Sweden*

WHAT is the evolutionary advantage of a bee dying once it has stung an attacker? Why does it not live to sting another day?

HARVEY RUTT (June 30) provides part of the answer but misses the subtlety that makes this advantageous to the colony. Although painful, a single bee sting is not enough to deter a mammal in search of honey. When the sting is torn from a bee's body a scent sac at the base of the sting is ruptured. This releases an odour which stimulates other worker bees to attack and sting the intruder. Sting loss is thus a mechanism to ensure an escalated defence of the hive. — *Michael D Owen, Department of Zoology, University of Western Ontario, London, Ontario, Canada*

IS THERE any currency which has a higher unit value than sterling?

WHEN I was in Serbia in August 1993 there was possibly the world's worst hyperinflation. On arrival I got 25 million dinar for 1 Deutschmark.

Two weeks later it had gone up to 75 million. Prices were changing two or three times a day. Once when I was in a restaurant the waiter came round and marked up the price of my meal while I was still eating it! — *Alex Melbourne, Pakrac, Croatia*

Any answers?

I HAVE heard a representative of the Garifuna people state that there was a pre-Hispanic African presence on St Vincent. Is there any evidence to support this? — *Jim Ransom, Palo Alto, California, USA*

IS THERE any evidence that a small car is less safe in the event of an accident? — *Mark Walford, London*

WHY does drinking cider through a straw increase its intoxicating property? — *Gerard Mackay, Nesscliffe, Shropshire*

Answers should be e-mailed to weekly@guardian.co.uk, faxed to 0171/44171-242-0985, or posted to The Guardian Weekly, 75 Farringdon Road, London EC1M 3HQ

Letter from Japan Rosemary Chiba

Rites of passage

IN MARCH, with our gloriously clear skies, we had a whole week watching Hyakutake's streaming comet. Perhaps it was a portent. In April, the 89-year-old grandfather of a neighbour went missing.

Contentedly pedalling away with a large bottle of sake as a present, he bicycled 15km over a high range, to the base of the mountain where he'd been born. At dusk, he tidily parked his bike with its sake at the snowline, then plodded up the forest track. Within his lifetime, in the days when a "useless" mouth became a burden on a family's meagre resources, elderly people in rural areas such as ours would climb up to the mountains to die. This grandfather, however, was well cared for in his five-generation family.

The entire neighbourhood joined the police and volunteer firemen for the next three days, and we traced his last footprints in knee-deep snow up into a high and wild valley. After the prints faltered then petered out, we found nothing.

It was rice-seeding time, one of the busiest in the farming year, so his family was not only grieving but oppressed by having caused so much trouble to the community. They have virtually secluded themselves and will continue to do so for seven years, unless the body is found and a funeral held, even though neighbours protest that this is old-fashioned and too severe.

As the official police search lasted a mere three days, only family and friends continue searching each Sunday. The snow has gone and the undergrowth is heaving itself erect again. Bears have woken and may have young, so we climb with bells tied to our belts, hauling ourselves up near vertical mountains by hanging on to flowering azaleas, searching in vain.

Notwithstanding the distress and effort caused, I could not help but admire the old man's decision and courage: it seemed such a natural passing. A priest with a reputation for solving such mysteries said that the old man would be found sitting with his back to a tall straight tree. But in the untouched parts of the forest, filled with the songs of bush warblers and cuckoos, tall straight beeches and ancient cryptomerias abound. We encountered a dingy white *kamoshika*, a goatlike deer which considered us carefully before simply melting away into the undergrowth, much as the grandfather must have done. Here are the cultivars of so many English garden flowers growing wild, yet our fellow searchers drop their empty cans after lunch without a thought. Local people don't usually go into the mountains for pleasure, apart from a little mushroom or spring herb gathering. Hunting is permitted in the winter, and the mountains ring with shots that chill the blood. A neighbour has a room full of pathetic stuffed trophies, but his worst shot was into another man's stomach.

THE grandfather was of the same generation as Miyazawa Kenji, the much-loved writer who was born not far away, exactly 100 years ago. All his stories show his intimate knowledge of the wildlife of this area, but he grew up in a Japan recently opened to new technology, and found that equally fascinating. His tales are a curious mix of the natural and the modern; hunters wander into restaurants deep in the forest, boys travel on a train though the Milky Way. Usually, nature prevails.

Our search for the grandfather continued in vain at the time of the Japanese Star festival, when the lovers Vega and Altair meet for a single night across the Milky Way, and on a deeply dark night, I stood with our two sons, watching a real river of stars: fireflies in their thousands drifting along the old stone-lined irrigation canal. Visitors marvel at a sight which has vanished in the cities. I wonder how Miyazawa would have felt about the government plan to dub its new road system in this "backward" north-eastern area the Milky Way Plan. It will carve a road through our quiet mountains and drag in its wake the petrol stations, fast food restaurants and *pachinko* (pinball) parlours that inexorably line every trunk road in Japan.

Will we be able to see future comets, or fireflies?

A Country Diary

Ray Collier

SLOCHD: On a hillside a few miles south of Inverness there were 17 wild goats grazing and browsing along the woodland edge, with nannies and their kids. They are part of the tribe of goats living along the River Findhorn, although they do not stay at the Slochd all year.

The origin of these goats is uncertain, but one theory is that they escaped while being driven north, possibly from as far afield as Ireland. In the old droving days cattle were sent from the north of Scotland as far south as Smithfield Market in London, and goats were driven in the opposite direction. The drover would sell goats on his northward journey and might get rid of all of them by the time he reached the Borders. However, it was not uncommon for some of the goats to end up in Caithness, where at one time they were more common than sheep, cattle or horses.

In the north they were often referred to as the poor man's cow as they would feed on almost anything, their milk could be drunk, meat eaten and skins used, let alone other parts. But the problem with droving goats such distances was that as they went north and the countryside became wilder, so the goats could escape more easily. This is believed to be the way the tribe ended up on the Findhorn although there is speculation that tribes may have originated from the days when Britain was still part of the continental land-mass.

A few years ago, a villager excitedly told me that on a hill near the village which has the Gaelic name meaning goat hill he had just seen three white goats — the first seen there in his life. What he did not know was that someone living at the other end of the village had not managed to find a buyer for his three white goats and he had to get rid of them. As a billy, a nanny and a kid were involved, the hill may once again have its goats for the future.

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A night at the animal house

Andrew Clements hails Graham Vick's masterly interpretation of Lulu at Glyndebourne

ALBAN BERG'S Lulu starts with a Prologue in which an Animal Tamer introduces his menagerie to the audience. The orchestra makes it clear that each animal is to be identified with a character in the opera. But in Graham Vick's fascinating new production at Glyndebourne — the first there, and only the third ever of the complete work in Britain — there are no animals. The Animal Tamer, brilliantly, leeringly played by Donald Maxwell, comes on with a mirror that he aims accusingly at the audience: this time we are his menagerie, and it is our foibles and vices that are going to be so penetratingly explored over the next three hours of music, as it charts Lulu's life up to her death at the hands of Jack the Ripper.

Just in case anyone doubts that interpretation, Paul Brown's designs settle the matter. If the curved red brick wall, black-concrete stairs and pine doors of the set look familiar, so they should, for they perfectly replicate the fabric of the Glyndebourne theatre itself, while some of the costumes could outdo those seen picnicking on the lawns during the interval. It's a superbly effective dramatic conceit.

It's a cool, tightly organised reading that wastes nothing. Though the monochrome neo-expressionism of the film sequence which marks the midpoint of the opera, when Lulu's climb turns into decline, doesn't quite chime with the rest of the production, it is as disciplined and crisply made (by Matthew Richardson) as everything else.

If Lulu remains the most intriguing, most ambiguous of all 20th century operatic masterpieces, then its heroine is the hardest of characters to pin down. Vick doesn't attempt to impose anything upon her, but lets the other protagonists do that for him. In Christine Schäfer's performance there is no trace of the scheming, predatory harpie, or even of the poor abused waif; instead she offers herself as a blank sheet on which her admirers, husbands and lovers project their own fantasies. Schäfer's performance, sung with accuracy and command, and acted with cool precision, is the focus of the show but never, quite deliberately, its emotional core.

But amid all the mayhem and manipulation — a gruesome suicide and four murders, blackmail, prostitution and venereal disease — Lulu is a comedy; a black, surreal and possibly heartless one, but a comedy nevertheless. Vick's production does its best to point up the macabrely funny moments.

The scale of the Glyndebourne house suits this opera perfectly and gives Andrew Davis the opportunity to relish all the subtlety and teeming invention of the score. There is warmth, lucidity and drama in his conducting and the London Philharmonic plays marvellously for him. Altogether it's a revelatory evening.



Speaking in Latin . . . David Sanchez, one of the best young horn players PHOTOGRAPH: KIPPA MATTHEWS

Sanchez blows those blues away

DAVID SANCHEZ, the 27-year-old saxophonist from Puerto Rico, has been at the forefront of a high-profile group of American horn players since his debut disc The Departure in 1994, *writes Ron Atkins*. A percussionist originally, imaginative deployment of percussion is still the key story of Sanchez's music.

He demonstrated the rich continuity of what Jelly Roll Morton called "the Spanish tinge" at the Rhythmic club in Islington, London.

Jazz and Latin music are thought of as inseparable today, but the truth is that they've never been far apart, and Morton was celebrating the connection in the red light district of New Orleans 80-odd years ago. Now the line runs through the swaying melodies of bossa nova, the all-hands-to-the-congas approach of salsa. In each case, the beat defines the style.

Sanchez, something of a protégé of Dizzy Gillespie, can switch the Latin rhythms on and off with the kind of flexibility Gillespie made into a trademark.

Typifying the group's approach was the 30-minute Bomba Blues, a piece by Panamanian pianist Danilo Perez that Sanchez currently makes the centrepiece of his act. After an abstract introduction, with bird calls from Richie Flores and bass-slapping from John Benitez, the theme filtered through and led to a spot for Eric Reed's piano that ended with crashing chords over the full percussive treatment.

There was more abstraction when Sanchez took over, then drums and percussion came in until the tempo doubled, Flores dropped out and we had a jazzy minor blues at full throttle. Throughout, Sanchez never lost his poise while producing those rounded tones on tenor sax which until lately seemed to have vanished with Dexter Gordon. Flores eventually cut loose, bringing the congas into play, occasionally damping the sound with an elbow.

Turn out the lights and sleep through life

CINEMA
Derek Malcolm

FRENCH comedies have a way of being either ludicrous farce or so tied to reality that you don't know whether to laugh or cry. **Les Apprentis** is of the latter variety.

It details the lives of two young men slopping about in a Parisian flat and making a virtue of having no discernible future at all.

The film has a gentle charm that makes you almost will the pair to do something with their lives, even if you know they almost certainly won't. It also has two very smart performances at its centre which carry it along when all else fails.

Guillaume Depardieu, Gérard's son, provides one of them as Fred, a louche kid who wants to be a photographer and sustains himself with the thought that it is worth eating endless bowls of cornflakes with water and sugar in order to save enough money to buy a decent camera. He blinks at life as if God would do him a favour by turning out the light and letting him sleep through it.

François Cluzet is Antoine, the older man, a would-be playwright distracted from writing an unfinished letter to his uncaring girlfriend by the sound of his friend peeing noisily in the lavatory.

The two are firm if wary friends, seeing in each other a reflection of themselves and constantly upbraiding one another. They spin out their time either mooching around the flat or patrolling the streets, where Philippe Eidel's catchy music performs a commentary that livens the proceedings considerably.

This is not the Paris of dreaming artists or of bourgeois on the make but of young people who never read the papers and seem prepared for a life clinging on to the skirts of a vaguely hostile world.

Naturally, everything goes wrong for them. When they decide to burgle the premises of the karate magazine where Antoine sometimes works, they are frightened by the cat and, though managing somehow to break into the safe, leave their house keys behind on the editor's desk. Mortified by guilt when easily discovered, Antoine goes into a steep decline and is hastened to a sanatorium.

Meanwhile Fred finds that the girl he fancies (Judith Henry) has a stage manager boyfriend and couldn't possibly be unfaithful. She does, however, suggest that they make love back in the stage manager's flat because he likes to watch when not staring at MTV. His expression, on learning that he will get what he wants but with an extremely embarrassing caveat, is a joy.

The film abounds in such small moments and, by centring first and foremost on the possibilities of friendship, magnifies them to mean something. And the two leading performances are impeccably natural and, in the case of Cluzet, superbly timed throughout.

All this adds up to a slight but still oddly memorable film.

Michael Lehmann, who made the sharp and likeable Heathers, could hardly have had a worse follow-up than Hudson Hawk, in which he was scuppered by the vanity of producer and star Bruce Willis. Woe betide an independently-minded director sucked by success into Hollywood.

The Truth about Cats and Dogs is distinctly better, though never possessed of the irony of Heathers, a high school epic that dumped on every cliché in the book. This romantic comedy at least rearranges the clichés in a new pattern. Janeane Garofalo is a Plain Jane pet psychiatrist on an LA radio station. She is rung for advice by Ben Chaplin, who has a dog with a personality crisis and he is so taken by her voice that he attempts to meet her. Unfortunately, he mistakes her beautiful model friend (Uma Thurman) for her, and the deception is prolonged — the wrong girl gives a turtle a rectal examination.

The problem with movies that have to end happily is that the Plain Jane isn't plain when she does her hair differently and takes off her glasses in the final scene. That doesn't quite happen here, but Garofalo's spunky performance still suggests she wouldn't be alone for long and how anyone could stand Thurman's dizzy babe for more than five minutes passes all understanding.

The result is very reasonable entertainment. Not quite in the class of Heathers but better than anything he has accomplished since.

A cut above the rest

TELEVISION
Nancy Banks-Smith

OF COURSE, if you are a man called Mandy, it will come out in terrible tantrums. I blame the parents. John Wayne would not have felt the need to shoot all comers if, when the preacher said "Name this child," Mr and Mrs Morrison had not replied "Marion".

Mandy Patinkin, who plays Dr Geiger in Chicago Hope (BBC1) was in a temper from the off. Alan, the little whispy one, was singing to his baby *"Itsy bitsy spider up a water spout. Down came the rain and washed the spider out. Out came the sun. . . ."* At this moving moment, Mandy snarled "The spider dies from melanoma because of the sun."

This gloomy prognosis weighed on Alan's mind throughout the programme, all through the business of the kidnapped heart and the exploding policeman.

There are a limited number of surgical series any one person can take without being found running down the street in their nightie but I am sorry to have missed this. It is black farce of a high order.

Watch suave Dr Watters reassuring two sets of worried relatives. "Unfortunately, your husband's donor heart has been kidnapped by a man with a gun. And, unfortunately, your son was shot with bullets that explode. We remain hopeful he won't blow up." The relatives stared at him open-mouthed. "We will" he added wildly "keep you appraised," and ran like a rabbit.

But I was telling you about Mandy. He was in a particular temper because a newly arrived surgeon, Dr Hancock, had appropriated the donor heart he needed for his own patient. He told him so with maximum offensiveness. "That took 22 seconds for him to hate you. It must be a new record," said Dr Watters. "It's not a record," snapped Mandy.

All this and they were still running the opening credits.

Now we are off and galloping. In the theatre, two patients were lying with opened chests waiting for the same donor heart while a gunman demanded, with a fusillade of bullets, that his brother should get it.

There was a particularly tense moment when the man's heart stopped and the surgeon had to restart it. ("Aaron, there's a bullet in there!" "Get back, Camille!" "Stop it, he'll explode!")

The gunman was twitchy ("Everybody shurrup! You shurrup and you shurrup!").

In this human Punch and Judy show, Chris Penn was uniquely moving as the gunman. Do I really need to tell you where the donor heart finally came from?

But the award for the most mesmerising supporting role in a medical series goes to the leech ("He won't bite. Well, in fact he will.") The size of those things.

By the way, for Alan and all animal lovers, spiders don't catch melanoma. At least not if the melanoma sees it coming.

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Newcastle's risen son

OBITUARY
Chas Chandler

CHAS CHANDLER, who has died aged 57, will be remembered as a bassist who played on the Animals' 1964 House Of The Rising Sun, but his fame rests on his role as the man who "discovered" Jimi Hendrix.

Recently featured on BBC TV's Dancing In The Street, he talked about the Animals and how he brought Hendrix to London after seeing him play in a New York club. But there was more. In the early 1970s it was Chandler who fashioned Slade into one of Britain's most successful groups via a string of stomping anthems.

Chandler was born in Heaton near Newcastle and worked as a ship's instrument-maker while gigging with Alan Price in local bands in the late 1950s. In 1962, singer Eric Burdon joined what was then the Alan Price Combo. Legend has it that they overheard fans describing them as "animals" and took the insult for their name. The Animals honed their version of American R&B in Geordie clubs before being spotted by producer Mickie Most and moving to London in 1964.

Their first single, Baby Let Me Take You Home, hit the top 30, but then came House Of The Rising Sun.

Its four-and-a-half minutes made it one of the longest singles ever released but the public's appetite for the grim tale propelled it to No 1 and back to the charts in 1972 and 1982. More hits followed before friction with Burdon led Alan Price to quit in 1965. The Animals soldiered on, but dabbling with drugs splintered the band.

It was during their farewell 1966 American tour that Chandler heard Hendrix, on the recommendation of Keith Richard's girlfriend, Linda Keith. He invited Hendrix to England, and on the plane James Hendricks became Jimi Hendrix.

Chandler was pivotal to Hendrix's career, signing him to a record deal, producing Hey Joe, Purple Haze, The Wind Cries Mary and encouraging the "wild man" stage act.

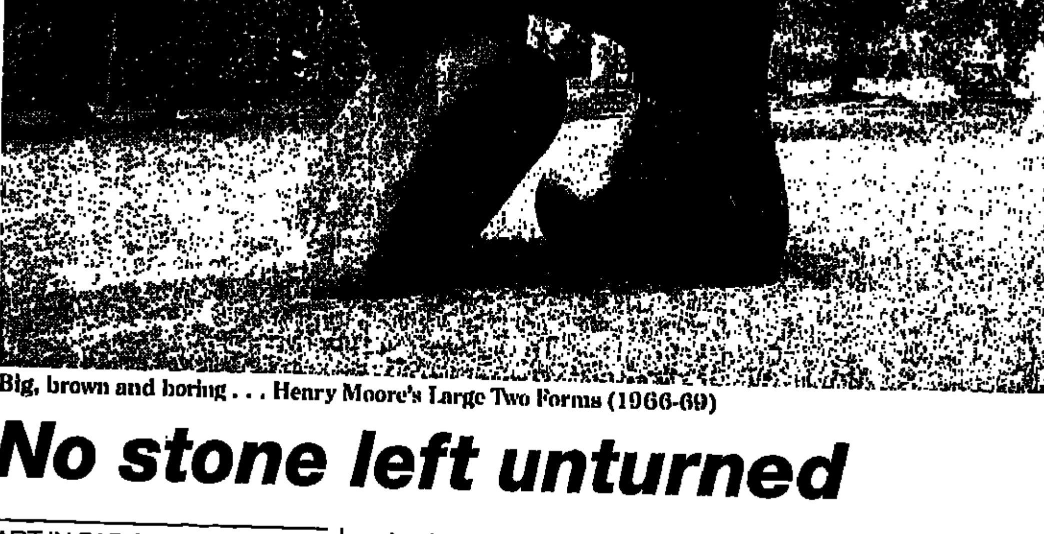
In 1969, Chandler became manager-producer of a Wolverhampton group, Ambrose Slade. In 1971, after truncating their name, came the top 20 hit Get Down And Get With It, followed by a string of hits that put Slade in the forefront of glam-rock.

Chandler went on to launch his own Barn Records and other labels, then in 1976 linked up with the other ex-Animals for an album. Sporadic reunions followed. In recent years Chandler had been involved with creating the Newcastle Arena while keeping his hand in producing and managing bands.

Chandler was a solid professional. In management he was more friend than Mr Ten Per Cent. In fact, it's hard to find a bad word said about Chas Chandler. In a career that spanned five decades in the music business, that might be his greatest achievement. He leaves his wife Madeleine, three children and a son by an earlier marriage.

Mike Oldfield

Chas (Bryan) Chandler, musician and manager, born December 18, 1938; died July 17, 1996



Big, brown and boring . . . Henry Moore's Large Two Forms (1966-69)

No stone left unturned

ART IN PARIS
Adrian Searle

AH, SUMMER TIME in Paris: infants dribbling ice-cream in the sunshine, old men arguing over boules, young lovers strolling in the shade of the chestnut trees in the Tuileries. But what's this the kids are playing hide-and-seek around — these funnels, dishes, sawn-off cylinders and slabs, these towers and turrets, this battleship-grey parade of late industrial menace moored on the gravel? It is a monumental Caro, British sculpture's flagship, glinting in the sun.

This huge apotheosis of the sculptor's art — not to say to the sculptor's hubris — is Anthony Caro's latest and largest sculpture, the centrepiece to A Century Of British Sculpture, currently on show in Paris at the Jeu de Paume, and spilling out around the gardens of the Tuileries. Henry Moore's Large Two Forms (1966-69), big, brown and boring, expires in the heat. A 1960s agglomeration of psychedelic plumbing by Eduardo Paolozzi squats on a terrace, and one of Barry Flanagan's overblown bronze hares tries to lollop away, but there's no escape.

Selected by the Jeu de Paume's director, Daniel Abadie, the exhibition presents an oddly collapsed view of British sculpture in the 20th century. We hurtle directly from Jacob Epstein's 1913 torso for the Rock Drill to Henry Moore, Barbara Hepworth and Ben Nicholson's struggles with European Modernism in the 1930s. Then straight to sixties swingers Caro, Phillip King and Paolozzi. After Richard Long's dreary walks and tedious circles of stone comes late seventies semiotic conceptualism (Michael Craig Martin's infamous glass of water, which he liked to convince us was actually an oak tree). Then we arrive at the playful early eighties, with the works of Bill Woodrow, Tony Cragg and Richard Deacon, whose mini-renaissance of British sculpture did away with pomposity in favour of DIY fabrication and everyday materials.

Anish Kapoor provides a couple of moments of spiritual calm, and Antony Gormley's crouching lead body cast asks what-is-my-place-in-the-universe-as-I'm-sitting-halfway-up-a-wall. Out of breath, we arrive at the near-present with Rachel Whiteread's Ghost, her celebrated, sepulchral cast of the space inside a room in an abandoned house, and finish off with Damien Hirst's Turner Prize-winning Mother And Child Divided, the last being the only bit of British beef to cross the Channel these past months.

Those expecting a history lesson, or an overview of 20th century British sculpture, will be disappointed. Where, critics will ponder, are the stone-masons of yesteryear? Whatever happened to the Geometry of Fear school of post-war angular, welded angst? Where are Frank Dobson, Elizabeth Frink, and — more to the point — the conspicuously rebuffed William Tucker, whose own sculpture and polemical writings would have provided the missing link between the earlier generations of post-war British sculptors and artists like Richard Deacon? Where, sculpture's trainspotters might ask, is "Nibs" Dalwood, or Alfred Gilbert (sculptor of the Piccadilly Circus Eros)? In the catalogue, consigned to an appendix.

What this exhibition signally fails to do is make the telling juxtapositions it could. Corralled in their generational corners, or shunted into lonely rooms, few of the artists here actually speak to one another except by way of platitudes. If only Richard Deacon had been placed with Phillip King, or Whiteread with Hepworth, Paolozzi with Cragg . . . Hirst's mad cows might also have had an interesting run-in with Moore, Much Haddam's master of the sheep's vertebrae and the sucked-toffee torso. What the show cries out for is a little iconoclasm, and less subservience to history.

YET THE show is enjoyable enough, and a reminder of how inventive Caro was in his sixties heyday, how wacky were Phillip King's cone-meets-flattened-moose-antler sci-fi sculptures.

But the show is also a salutary reminder of how derivative Moore and Hepworth were in their attempts to escape British provincialism in the thirties, most tellingly by their borrowings from Giacometti's early Surrealist works. They mistook the yawning, trembling vacancy of Giacometti's small-scale works for elegant austerity. When money and opportunity allowed them to make large-scale, open-air works, they just blew things up, in a futile attempt to compete with the landscape, with modern architecture, with the gargantuan feats of engineering.

The British show plods from one generation to the next, in textbook fashion. So much of the history is missing, and the curator would have done better to look at the work in terms of larger issues of content.

Giacometti, by way of rejoinder, is on show over at the Pompidou centre, in L'Informe: mode d'emploi (Formlessness: how to use it). The exhibition points up the irrelevance of basing shows on national and temporal affinities. L'Informe widens the context of the late George Bataille's ideas about formlessness, entropy, death and decay to make an exhibition which is both heterogeneous and stylistically transgressive. One room here pays homage to the artists who gravitated to Bataille — Hans Bellmer, with his dismembered dolls; Wols, with his photographs of skinned rabbits, buttons and filthy combs clogged with hair; Eli Lotar's grim slaughterhouse scenes. But curators Rosalind Krauss and Yves-Alain Bois have extrapolated from this core to concoct a disturbing, thought-provoking exhibition which crosses all kinds of boundaries, shuttling from thirties Paris to modern LA, from Pollock's Abstract Expressionism to Allan McCollum's recent re-cast dinosaur footprints.

Here, Pollock hangs opposite Warhol's Oxidation paintings; Robert Morris's mulch of cotton waste, inset with mirrors, heaves across the floor towards Eva Hess's droopy fibreglass sausages; Mike Kelley has hidden some unknown objects under a beautiful rug. There is a "vulgar" room of Fontana's glitzy, spangled egg-shaped paintings, Manzoni's Achromes and Fautrier's cosmetic-coloured abstracts. There's a wonderful Bruce Nauman work, laid out on a funereal plinth, looking like a priceless and ancient gold and platinum ceremonial cape. It is actually made of torched aluminium foil and layers of muck and grease.

Like Bataille's spider weaving its web, this show could enmesh the Jeu de Paume, Tuileries and all. Francis Bacon, whose painterly attitude owes something to Bataille's fierceness, has another retrospective at the Pompidou. Krauss and Bois's exhibition would have made a fitting context, and said more about him, and the place of British art in this century, than any amount of blockbusting Brit-fests.

Un Siècle de Sculpture Anglaise runs at the Jeu de Paume, Paris, until September 15. L'Informe is at the Pompidou Centre until August 26

Mistress of comic anguish

THEATRE
Michael Billington

I *HOPE* John Birt takes note of the outstanding success of Shelagh Stephenson's The Memory Of Water at London's Hampstead Theatre. For Stephenson is a product of BBC radio drama which over the years has done far more than television to promote original writing. In her first stage play, she also combines a flair for witty dialogue with a relish for the dynamics of theatre.

In outline, her play may sound familiar: three sisters gather in the Tyneside family home for their mother's funeral. What emerges, however, is a very individualistic work about sibling rivalry, competitive memory and the inescapable shadow of the past. Mary, a 39-year-old doctor in the throes of an adulterous affair, both communes with her mother's ghost and is forced to confront the tragic consequences of her own teenage pregnancy. Bossy Teresa, who runs a health-food business with her morose hubby, has clearly married a replica of her late father. And egomaniacal Catherine, who claims to have had 78 lovers, has both rejected her mother's steely dourness and been palpably shaped by it.

You could easily pick holes in the play's structure: too many skeletons come tumbling out of the heavily-populated family closet and the maternal revenant outstays her welcome. But Stephenson writes well about filial guilt and, in an echo of Pinter's Old Times, the subjectivity of memory. And her play is blessedly and mercurially funny. Best of all is a scene in which Teresa and her husband, who met through a newspaper dating ad, discover they have violently antithetical tastes: "You've been pretending to like Woody Allen all these years," she cries.

The play is directed by Terry Johnson, who shares Stephenson's capacity to create wild laughter out of domestic pain. He also gets first-rate performances from the three sisters. Haydn Gwynne's Mary radiates fretful intelligence and fierce guilt. Jane Booker's over-organised Teresa is a wonderful study in comic imperviousness. And Matilda Ziegler's Catherine, sporting a black mini-dress for the funeral, lives in a permanent state of self-obsession.

There is also something magnificently doleful about Dermot Crowley who, as Teresa's husband, hates health foods and finds himself trapped on flights with people who run puppet theatres for the deaf. Stephenson, mistress of comic anguish, is clearly a real find.

Publish and be damned

Carmen Callil

Bestseller
by Olivia Goldsmith
HarperCollins 514pp £15.99

OPAL O'NEAL, the mother of Terry, is a librarian from Bloomington, Indiana. Terry lives in a New York flea pit. She has 26 rejection slips for her novel "The Duplicity of Men", 1,114 pages long. She hangs herself on receipt of the 27th.

Camilla Clapfish, demure, worthy and Catholic, finishes her first novel, "A Week in Firenze", in San Gimignano, and bumps into Frederick, an American. His sister Emma, a lesbian, is an editor in a New York publishing house. Frederick is going blind and spurns Camilla's pity. (I'm sure I saw Rossano Brazzi in a film with this plot many years ago.) Frederick is great in bed — "She felt rapturous. Frederick's passionate love-making . . . his hunger, his skill", and so forth.

Susann Baker Edmonds is a 58-year-old fiction megastar, a has-been face-lifted beyond salvation. Despite her millions she is sick at heart.

Her literary agent/lover Alf is a bloodsucking barracuda and her daughter Kim an addict and abuse victim who wants to write a novel. Her only comfort is the faithful Edith, who mouths platitudes.

Judith Hunt, goodie two-shoes, has fallen in love with her tutor Daniel Gross, who leaves his wife so they can marry. They need money so he gets her to write a novel, "In Full Knowledge". Then he sells it under his own name and pockets all the cash and what's more sleeps with his editor, Pam Mantiso (preying Mantiss, geddit?). She is editor in chief of Davis & Dash, who publish Terry's manuscript, Camilla's novel, Susann Edmonds and now "In Full Knowledge".

Judith, Camilla, Opal and Susann are all good women. The sort of men they shack up with are "lying, manipulative, ungrateful, disloyal" — and power-crazed to boot.

At Davis & Dash all is a seething mass of villainy and corruption — "a bunny eat bunny world". Senior publishing executives read little and rarely edit a book: they're too busy working a four-day week, downing vodka, fornicating and making, borrowing or stealing money. Real work is done by saintly minions who fiddle around with manuscripts to turn them into books which exist only to make money.

The tedium of this is exacerbated by lengthy descriptions of the processes of publishing — every minor clause, book-signing event and price-received royalty is dragged in as a plot point and the Frankfurt Book Fair and American Booksellers Convention are described in detail.

Many famous publishers put in an appearance — "tiny Harry Evans", "charming Patrick Janson Smith", "delightful and eminent" Liz Calder. An astonishing appearance is made by Knopf's former publisher Bob Gottlieb at the Frankfurt Book Fair, a place that he has never visited in his life.

To this cauldron of book publishing, Bestseller adds a large portion of disagreeable sexual activity. This is a novel to make men wilt. Every sexual encounter is judged by the quality of the "lay", as though men were hens. Another puzzle is how American publishers find so much time for sex — time saved perhaps, in Olivia Goldsmith's version of things, by paying no attention at all to the written word.

Bestseller disgorges two pieces of interesting information. The first is a new category of fiction; "slice-and-dice" in which male writers get kicks writing about chopping women up into bits, the bits to be then used for interesting sexual purposes. The second is the scam the chief honcho at Davis & Dash dreams up, whereby you "borrow" sales from one author to pass them on to another, thus earning out more advances and improving the bottom line. I wish I'd thought of that.

To increase her sales, Olivia Goldsmith has provided a lengthy cod acknowledgment page, and an index in which every well-known person in British and American publishing is listed, sometimes flatteringly. She would have benefited greatly from an editor's help to correct the mistakes and fill in the yawning gaps in the plot, but most of all to use a heavy red pencil on the clichés which infest the book like an army of cockroaches: kisses are deep, joy is bittersweet, listening breathless, futures brilliant, promises new, tears bitter, and more, much more.

As a sordid piece of Americana, Bestseller has a certain allure, but nothing can make up for the fact that it breaks flagrantly Rule No 1 for the writing of popular fiction. Do Not Bore Your Readers. No cash should pass from reader to bookseller for this piece of work. One of the publishing *bon mots* in Bestseller sums it up: "People don't have to read to be bored. They can be that all by themselves."

Carmen Callil is chairman of the 1996 Booker Prize panel and a former publisher

Careless talk cost lives

Philip Hensher

The Orchard On Fire
Shena Mackay
Heinemann 214pp £12.99

SHENA MACKAY is, I think, one of the most adorable of contemporary novelists. Her career falls into two neat halves; five short novels, written quickly in her teens and early twenties, all smart, insolent *jeux d'esprits* full of huge cleverness and relish for her gift. Between 1971 and 1983, she published nothing; when, with a volume of short stories and a splendid, ambitious novel, A Bowl Of Cherries, she returned, her voice had changed, enriched with tenderness and a new grandeur.

Since then, each novel has shown a deepening subtlety. The Orchard On Fire is another extremely beautiful and funny novel by Mackay, a memory of an English rural childhood. The countryside, in Mackay, is not the setting for a pastoral idyll, or the wild lurking place of pagan gods. In Coronation year, April Harlency, uprooted from Streatham to Stonebridge, finds a town with the air of a transplanted suburb. Her parents, planning to make a go of running a tea shop, find the locals petty and resistant; April makes a welcome best friend in the daughter of the local pub-owner, and a less welcome one in the figure of Mr Greenidge, whom everyone else thinks respectable, and only she finds a bit creepy.

Everything seems set for a relaxed comedy, and the sharply observed figures of the locals — two artistic ladies, Bobs and Dittany, come in for a lot of stick — might seem like a very superior version of The Last Of The Summer Wine. But more serious events are tugging beneath the smooth surface of the novel. The tea shop doesn't seem to be working out; Ruby, the landlord's daughter, is seen to be strangely bruised when donning her costume as a mince-pie for the school Christmas play. But, in the end, it's Mr Greenidge, the dreadful lecher with the usefully poorly wife, who is turned into a victim by the awful, thoughtless chatter of children.

The Orchard On Fire is probably Mackay's most perfect book, produced with a technical adroitness and shapeliness which one can only envy. The perfect symmetry to be found here, however, is not something anyone has previously enjoyed in Mackay; one might regret the more classical balance of this book, achieved at the expense of the ramshackle, eccentric flights of invention in her best previous books. There's a slight loss of the delirious, spontaneous romanticism which makes books such as Dreams Of Dead Women's Handbags so memorable. But it's hard to imagine anyone being disappointed in The Orchard On Fire; its pure, English lyricism leads with subtle inevitability to a final chapter of restrained, affecting grief for the loss of someone who was not a lover, not a parent, but merely a friend.

Here, friendship is the most important thing in the world, and Mackay's subject is how we only understand the importance of its ordinary joys, unhymned by art, passed over in favour of more blatant passions, when it has left us. Her novel tells the story, in a way, of an extraordinary experience, an exceptional series of events. But what sticks in the mind is the effortless weight of emotion with which the simple pleasures of food and comfort, the school days and the scary expectation of parents are freighted.

Analysis-free psychiatry for the soul

Sonu Shamdasani

Carl Gustav Jung: A Biography
by Frank McLynn
Bantam Press 624pp £25

IN THE cultural imagination, Jung remains bound up with Freud. A proper historical understanding of their work — often misunderstood and mythologised — is essential for understanding modern Western culture.

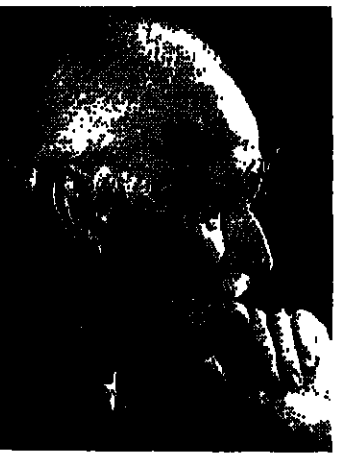
According to the Freudian legend, through analysis of himself and his patients Freud discovers the unconscious, infantile sexuality and the Oedipus complex. Jung is "Freud's disciple", who defects to form his own school of analytical psychology in reaction to the perceived shortcomings of his mentor.

The posthumous publication of what has been taken to be Jung's autobiography, Memories, Dreams, Reflections (which has formed the basis of all biographies of Jung, including this one), did little to correct the legend. The work itself was actually an expurgated biography, written by his secretary. On reading early drafts, Jung felt that it had turned him into an old maid. His attempts to rectify Memories were cut short by his death in 1961.

The current spectacular demise of psychoanalysis has, however, begun to demolish the myths erected by the Freudian faithful, showing that Freud was far from being an original genius. This has in turn opened the way for a reappraisal of Jung, as an independent figure in his own right rather than a Freudian heretic.

For his followers, Jung underwent a personal revelation of greater epochal significance than Freud's legendary self-analysis. Through it, Jung discovered the archetypes of the collective unconscious, and the means for modern man to recover his soul. While psychoanalysis dominated the academic world, Jung was adopted as a guru by the New Age movement. Jung's views on the continued relevance of myth were the seed-bed for the mythic revival.

As a psychiatrist, Jung played a pivotal role in the formation of the modern concept of schizophrenia, and the idea that the psychoses were of psychological origin and amenable to psychotherapy.


Carl Jung: reconciled science and religion through psychology

During his association with Freud, he was the principal architect of the psychoanalytic movement, inaugurating the rite of training analysis, which became the dominant form of instruction in modern psychotherapy. His formulation of psychological types of introverts and extroverts with numerous sub-varieties have spawned countless questionnaires. His interest in Eastern thought was the harbinger of the post-colonial Easternisation of the West. Intent on reconciling science and religion through psychology, his work has met with endless controversy.

BUT the bare bones of his *Vita* offer unpromising fare for a biographer, particularly for Frank McLynn, whose previous subjects include the explorers Stanley and Burton and the novelists Stevenson and Rider Haggard.

Born in Switzerland in 1875, Carl Gustav Jung was the son of a pastor. Between 1895 and 1900, he studied medicine at the University of Basle. In the early 1900s, he was a psychiatrist at the Bürgholzli asylum in Zurich. Thereafter he worked in private practice psychotherapy until his retirement. His published works encompass 19 volumes.

McLynn states that his own volume is not definitive, as all the relevant material has not been released into the public domain. We also learn that he deliberately avoided "expert advice or academic reading" to avoid absorbing "conscious or unconscious *parti pris*". Disappointingly, he makes no use of the thousands of letters of Jung and related materials readily available in numerous archives. He has not interviewed any of Jung's associates or family, nor made use of the 140 interviews of Jung's associates conducted by Gene Namache, which are on open access in the Jung oral history archive. Instead, he relies exclusively on published material (often without due attribution). A few references haven't been cited before, but he largely regurgitates information from earlier Jung biographies. This would be fine if these works were reliable, but they aren't.

A third of the biography is devoted to a re-run of the Freud-Jung relationship. Many of Jung's subsequent dreams are reinterpreted as being "really" about Freud, and McLynn's analysis of Jung is shot through with a pop Freudianism. By continually treating wild speculation as fact, McLynn's work becomes a historical fiction.

Concerning the difficulty of writing a biography of him, E A Bennet reports Jung saying that "unless the development of his thought were central to his biography it would be no more than a series of incidents, like writing the life of Kant without knowing his work".

This aptly describes McLynn's weakness. He finds Jung's work "far from intellectually coherent"; judging by his own garbled account and fantastic extrapolations, this indicates his own failure to do any homework. As to what Jung might have made of this book, in a statement omitted from Memories as published, he remarked that "already so much rubbish has been said about me, that a little more or less does not disturb me".

Paperbacks

Nicholas Lezard

Season of Blood: A Rwandan Journey, by Fergal Keane (Penguin, £6.99)

ALL BUT the most conscientious of us, you feel, have skimmed through, rather than absorbed, the news from Rwanda, either because it is too awful to contemplate or it is relegated to what a friend of Keane's calls the "kids in the fridge school of journalism". As Keane says: "Where television is concerned, African news is generally only big news when it involves lots of dead bodies." Political analysis — which, had it been timely, could have prevented most of the carnage — goes by the board. (Our vague ideas about Hearts Of Darkness etcetera allow people to get away with mass murder.) This book provides all the analysis you need; but as an eye-witness account of the carnage (and, pro rata, the Hutus' attempted genocide of the Tutsis is up there with the century's greatest acts of calculated evil), it is also terrifyingly instructive, a photograph of hell.

Vile Bodies, by Evelyn Waugh, ed & int Richard Jacobs (Penguin 20th-Century Classics, £6.99)

THOSE who think Waugh's satire too pointed or obvious to need critical apparatus (and I was one) should think again. Jacobs's introduction and notes re-animate the novel; the former, in particular, being a triumph of sensitive close reading, useful knowledge, and intelligent and illuminating speculation. And in a world where journalism ignores chaos to cover the exploits of trivial personalities and zombie celebs, the novel itself is as pertinent and caustic (and funny) as ever.

The Primitive, by Stephen Amidon (Indigo, £5.99)

EXCELLENT moral thriller in which a struggling thirtyish copywriter from a moribund South Carolina town rescues a woman from a car wreck and then becomes gradually involved in what can be confidently described as a web of sex, crime and deceit. This sounds like familiar enough territory but as its strengths include some wonderfully snappy dialogue and an unexpectedly interesting sub-plot about the death of culture, it makes for an original addition to the genre.

Greyhound for Breakfast, by James Kelman (Minerva, £6.99)

WELCOME reprint of Kelman's 1987 collection of short stories and micro-fictions, vernacular prose poems which fuse the rhythms of both modernism and Glaswegian street speech. Alasdair Gray says that "Cute Chick" is "the funniest short story in the British language", but I think "Samaritans" is funnier: "Good, I says, but I'm thinking well fuck you as well, that's my last fag man I mean jesus christ almighty."


Administrating an enema 17th century style in an engraving by Abraham Bosse

Don't know much about biology?

Raymond Tallis

The Cambridge Illustrated History of Medicine
edited by Roy Porter
Cambridge 400pp £24.95

THE challenge of compiling a user-friendly history of something as complex and huge as medicine is to keep the big questions alive amid the empirical detail, particularly when the latter is so rich. Roy Porter meets this challenge wonderfully with a thematic rather than chronological organisation, with chapters devoted to topics such as primary care, medical science, and the relationship between medicine, society and the state. The reader's appetite for raw fact is cunningly and painlessly satisfied by numerous panels, chronological tables and lists. As befits an "illustrated" history, there is hardly a page without an image — photograph, etching, oil painting — italicising the poignant, horrific or heroic facts in the text.

The opening chapter is, appropriately, a history of disease itself. Kenneth Kiple's account of the ancient adversary — dominated by the dialectic between man and the organisms that infect and infest him — is full of arresting observations. He points out that by inventing agriculture, humans also "cultivated disease" and that, until recently, cities were generally so unhealthy that their populations could not replace themselves by reproduction: they maintained their numbers only by immigration from the surrounding countryside.

Vivian Nutton's story of the rise of medicine emphasises how it differentiated itself from mere healing (or would-be healing) by the acquisition of a specific body of practical and theoretical knowledge. This may seem self-evident, but it was the beginning of the long, bumpy journey to evidence-based practice from the intuitive, charismatic healer, who often sought divine authorisation for his meddling in human suffering.

Admittedly, many centuries passed before the theoretical base of medicine was rooted in solid fact and many more before this delivered any therapeutic pay-off. In the interim, there was tension between the university men, the early professional physicians learned in the great treatises, and the artisans — the humble, itinerant bone-setters or tooth-extractors who, for all their lack of learning, probably made the greater contribution to alleviating suffering. Only in the last century have the theoreticians come good, with the emergence of a true medical science, founded upon an understanding of the biology and pathology of the human body.

The transition from the intuitive healer to the scientific doctor was driven by, and drove, a revolution in our understanding of the nature of sickness. Illness ceased to be seen as an expression of the individual soul. Porter traces the modern notion that we are only accidentally linked to the pathological dramas that unfold in our bodies back to the Cartesian separation of the mind from the body-machine. This separation (which, of course, problematises the notion of mental illness) was not only a pre-condition of a true medical science but also freed the sufferer from responsibility for the sorrows visited upon him by his errant body: the patient is a blameless victim.

This humane attitude had a down side. Porter comments on "the disappearance of the sick man" in the 19th century: "Doctors directed their gaze not on the individual sick person but on the disease of which his or her body was the bearer." To be the object of modern scientific medical attention is to be reminded of the paradox that one is or has a body that possesses certain objective, general, impersonal properties largely hidden from oneself, but which is, nevertheless, uniquely one's own.

Porter suggests that we are currently living in "medicine's finest hour", which "may also be the dawn of its dilemmas": never have people in the West lived so long, or been so healthy, and never have medical achievements been so great. Yet, paradoxically, rarely has medicine drawn such intense doubts and disapproval as today. No one could deny that the medical breakthroughs of the past 50 years have saved more lives than those of any era since the dawn of medicine.

He argues that medicine has become the prisoner of its own success. The very effectiveness of the doctor exposes him "to being viewed primarily as a figure of authority, the tool of patriarchy, or the servant of the state". Porter is concerned that, "with mission accomplished, medicine's triumphs are dissolving in disorientation". His history, therefore, has a second goal: not only to describe how medicine became so powerful, but also to reflect on its future: to re-define its limits even as it extends its capacities. What are its aims? Where is it to stop? These questions are addressed in a superb final chapter by Geoff Watts exploring the triumphs, tensions and ethical dilemmas of modern scientific medicine, which — unlike the thousand conflicting varieties of folk medicine — commands worldwide acceptance.

Our lives in their hands

Christopher Hawtree

The Dictionary of National Biography 1986-1990
edited by C S Nicholls
Oxford 607pp £50

The Dictionary of National Biography, from the Earliest Times to 1985 CD-Rom
Oxford £350

"MUCH of the work to be done was uninteresting, if not absolutely repulsive," sighed Leslie Stephen, first editor of the Dictionary Of National Biography. Well might Stephen grumble, for it was to kill him, even though when he began work in 1882 (just two years before the first of 60 volumes appeared), he was fit enough to sire a daughter, Virginia Woolf. Famously, she portrayed him in To The Lighthouse as Mr Ramsay on that metaphorical mental quest for Z, stalled at Q. Stephen's was a troubled spirit, with terrible genetic consequences, and one marvels at his cajoling and quelling of the contributors before handing over to his deputy, Sidney Lee.

Anecdotes are legion. Although agnostic, he welcomed a strong clerical element, but balked at the 1,400 hymn-writers urged by one correspondent. The weeping widow of an Indian army officer wailed, "My dear husband slew with his own sword 14 sepoys. All India rang with the deed, and there is not a word of it in his biography."

Stephen felt that he had "been dragged into the damnable thing by fate like a careless workman passing moving machinery".

Although able to call upon the eminent to contribute, he often had to use inspired journeymen (100 men wrote three-quarters of the 29,120 lives). Robert Harrison, of the London Library, contributed many, sneaking in his mother, an obscure flower-painter "of limited scope". At a celebratory dinner, the Prince of Wales asked Stephen about Canon Ainger and was told that he was an authority on Lamb. Expostulated the Prince, "lamb?"

The quirks which are the DNB's charm are a happy distraction from the task it invariably aids. Its worth — and faults — are all the greater with the fresh serendipities of the CD-Rom, an amazing bargain which contains everybody to 1985. Limitless connections are possible, schoolfriends and graveyard neighbours available in an instant; but tap in "suicide" and the word scarcely occurs, a reflection upon coroners' reluctance to put the illegal act on a certificate (all of these are consulted).

If alive at 92, another avid DNB reader, Evelyn Waugh, would shudder at such a disc. Revision itself made him fear that somebody would "cut it down, spice it up, stick in some snaps from the Picture Post 'library', bind it in plastic, hawk it from door to door".

Professor Colin Matthew laughed — and photocopied the piece — when I showed it to him in a large room in St Giles', Oxford. "I wouldn't mind if OUP hawked it from door to door," he said of his full-scale revision, due out in 2005.

The work, he says, is more than interesting and certainly not repulsive. "From the Romans onwards, we have some 15,000 new entries. A DNB entry is all the biography that some subjects need and it is at its best in these. Some — Queen Victoria — were too long. Anybody can make suggestions. We are ranging across the country, and have had a marvellous response to our questionnaire — unlike Stephen, we do not have the creeping barrage of the alphabet. It will include people dead before the end of 2000 and appear all at once — printed, on disk and on-line. Subject volumes, impossible with hot metal, can easily evolve from it." His enthusiasm is palpable, suggestions and ideas jotted in the notebook always with him (yes, Brian Epstein is likely to get in at last).

Meanwhile there is the final Supplement, edited by Christine Nicholls. Nobody will read 1986-1990 cover to cover but a day zigzagging through it amounts to the same thing.

There is no predictable DNB tone. Richard Ingrams is never so mellow as in his work for it, and Kingsley Amis goes easier on John Braine than in the boozing-and-bedwetting Memoirs version. Then again, and high time too, Michael Powell's memoirs are called "boastful and vengeful". Olivier's and Chatwin's bisexuality are somewhat baldly mentioned. What can be meant by Storm Jameson's "sexual obsessions"? Alan Bennett's Diaries profess a strange envy of Russell Harty's grave, a view he now modifies, for the gravestone itself is "evidence of the vulgarity from which he never entirely managed to break free". And so that is the end of the DNB — until 2005, the New DNB . . .

ILLUSTRATION: ANN HOBDAY

Swift passage of summer

Mark Cocker

IT ALWAYS strikes me as an expression of uncharacteristic optimism that we have made the swallow, a migrant that arrives in April and finally leaves in October, the emblem of the British summer. For me, the season is much more completely and far more realistically expressed by another bird.

The breeding ecology of the swift, one of the most urban and yet, ironically, least known British species, is uniquely tied to the country's brief period of plenty. They reach us in May and depart just 16 weeks later. As if to emphasise the need for haste, the birds never land except to incubate their eggs and feed their young. Otherwise they can eat, drink, bathe, roost, collect nesting material and even copulate on the wing.

Swifts show a number of exceptional adaptations to this aerial existence. Their wingspan is just under half a metre, while their usual weight is about 40 grams. In order for the average man to enjoy the same ratio of body weight to wing-length, he would need wings, not the size of a jumbo jet, but half the length of an average runway.

With the coldest May on record for 70 years, and an early summer of low temperatures and incessant showers, Britain's breeding swifts have faced a number of problems. At the university tower in Oxford, for instance, where a study of the species has been ongoing for 40 years, this is the first time that not a single egg was laid before June.

Another problem they face concerns the high-flying insects on which they feed. Known as "aerial plankton", these swarms are adversely affected by cold, wet conditions, and in order to overcome any shortages, swifts have a number of fascinating survival strategies. One of these involves the birds abandoning their usual feeding territory and flying to areas beyond the influence of a cold weather system. Studies in Scandinavia have revealed birds to be feeding 600 kilometres from their nest sites, which is like London's swifts feeding over Edinburgh or those from Madrid trawling the airspace above Lisbon.

This behaviour dovetails with an equally impressive performance by the immatures in the nest. Most nestlings require constant brooding by their parents, but young swifts can be left unattended and enter a state of torpor, in which body temperature and metabolic rate fall, allowing them to conserve energy until the adults return.

While these adaptations allow swifts to offset the effects of temporary shortage, prolonged poor weather can depress breeding success. However, I am hoping that the adverse conditions will not disrupt what is for me the high point of the swift's brief visit. As the breeding season reaches its conclusion and the young start to emerge from their nests, the Norwich colony begins to gather in ever larger numbers. Sometimes as many as 200 birds congregate in a single flock, rising above the city like great swirling gyroscopes as dusk begins to fall. Then suddenly a fragment of the swarm will break away and come hurtling to earth in a frenzied screaming mob. So complete is their aerial control that these meteoric chases can pass just between the narrow terraces, almost at head height.

The purpose of these pre-migration congregations is not completely understood, but may serve to increase the colony's social cohesion. For me, however, they have a very different meaning. They create an atmosphere of exuberant passion, of energy almost beyond physical containment. They don't symbolise the summer, they are the summer, and when they finally go, the Norwich skies seem lifeless and small.

Chess Leonard Barden

ANATOLY KARPOV retained his Fide world championship title this month when the 45-year-old Russian beat his 22-year-old American challenger Gata Kamsky 10½-7½.

Karpov produced some vintage strategy in the first half of the series, then held off Kamsky's counterattack in game 13, where he drew a bishop ending two pawns down, before symmetrically winning game 14 in a bishop ending two pawns up.

Karpov's decisive victory only slightly clarifies the muddied world title situation. Will he next meet Garry Kasparov in a reunification match, take on a new Fide challenger or be defaulted through refusing to compete in the proposed annual championship knock-out? No one knows yet, not even Karpov.

Kamsky's father, Rustam, is the most eccentric chess character since Bobby Fischer's heyday. Before play began, he compared Karpov and Kasparov to Stalin and Hitler. Then, when Gata began to lose, he alleged that advice from the backstage computers was being smuggled in to help Karpov, and insisted that a permanent guard be placed in the computer room.

Offboard, there was the contest to become Mrs Kamsky. Rustam has asked Kalmykian girls between the age of 14 and 15 to telephone him with a view to taking up a contract to study with Gata in New York, where "if love appears, a marriage will be arranged".

Karpov-Kamsky, 9th game

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 d5 4 Nf3 Bg7 5 Qb3 dxc4 6 Qxc4 0-0 7 e4 a6 8 e5 b5 9 Qb3 Nfd7 10 Be3 Better than 10 e6 played in game 5.

c5 11 e6 c4 12 exf7+ Rxf7 13 Qd1 Nb6 Bb7 stops White's next, but runs into 14 a4 b4 15 Bxc4! Bxf3 16 gxf3 bxc3 17 Bxf7+ Kxf7 18 Qb3+ and 19 Qb7.

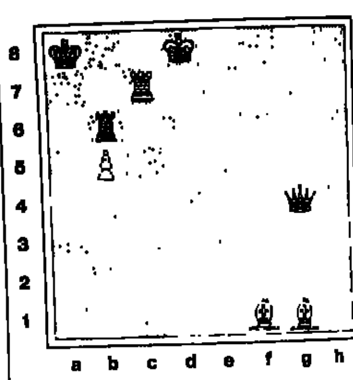
14 Ne5 Rf8 15 a4! b4 16 a5 bxc3 17 axb6 cxb2 18 Bxc4+ Kh8 19 Rb1 Qxb6 20 Qd2 Nd7 21 Rxb2 Nxe5!? Kamsky gives up his queen for rook and bishop, but hopes his passed pawn will stymie White's attack. If instead 21 . . . Qf6 White must avoid 22 Bg5? Qf5 23 Bxe7 Nxe5!, but either 24 f4 or 24 Nf3 keeps Black passive.

22 Rxb6 Nxc4 23 Qb4 Nxb6 24 Qxb6 a5 25 0-0 a4 26 Ra1 Bf5 27 h4 e6 Kamsky wants to set up a fortress by Bc2-b3. Short points out the nice trap a3 28 Qb3 Rfb8 29 Rxa3! Rxb3 30 Rxa8+ Bf8 31 Bh6, while 27 . . . Rfc8 loses a pawn to 28 Qb4.

28 Bf4 Controls b8. **Be4 29 Bd6 Rfc8 30 Qb5 Bc6 31 Qb4 Kg8 32 Ra3 Ra6?** A blunder, but White threatens 33 h5 gxh5 34 Rg3. Karpov's accurate play has prevented the fortress.

33 Qc4! Rca8 34 Qxe6+ Kh8 35 Be5 Bxe5 36 Qxe5+ Kg8 37 h5 Be8 38 h6 R6c7 39 d5 Rb7 40 d6 Rd8 41 Rf3 Resigns. There is no good defence to 42 Qh8+! Kxh8 43 Rf8 mate.

No 2431



White mates in five moves, (by J Mendheim, 1814) . . . but isn't it just mate in two? We haven't done yet. The white pawn must deliver mate, and the black rook can't be captured during the solution. This problem was included in a UK solving competition, where just one entrant cracked it. Can you do as well? There is only a single line of play.

No 2430: 1 Rxf6 Bxf6 2 Re1! threatens mate by Qh7+, while 2 . . . Be5 is refuted by 3 Qe6+ Kh8 4 Rxe5, when Black must give up his queen.

Quick crossword no. 324

Across

1 Crafty and unprincipled (13)
8 Hill (3)
9 Bred virus (anag) (3,6)
10 Started or put into the water (8)
11 Threesome (4)
13 Pounder (in mortar) (6)
14 Touch of affection (6)
16 Wander (4)
17 Ridiculous (8)
20 De facto (king) (9)
21 Floor covering (3)
22 Means of spreading news (4,9)

Down

1 Guns, rails, or ballast (5)
2 State of affairs (13)
3 Idiot (8)
4 Container — ship! (6)
5 Fat (4)
6 Apostrophe (8,5)
7 Apprehensive (7)
12 Monitor of government etc (5-3)
13 Make apprehensive (7)
15 Fleshly (6)
18 Fastening for door (5)
19 Ditto — flee! (4)

Last week's solution

Bridge Zia Mahmood

THE Junior European Championships began in Cardiff last week. Britain won the event the last time it was held, in 1994, but this time the home team will have to play extremely well to fight off the strong challenge from Norway, Denmark, France and Italy.

The 1994 Championships had a thrilling climax. With a match to play, Denmark looked home and dry, needing only to avoid a heavy defeat against Norway. Britain on the other hand had to beat France soundly and hope that Norway could produce the goods against the Danes.

They obliged in some style, hammering their Scandinavian rivals 24-6, but Britain suffered a setback on this paradoxical deal against France. Why paradoxical?

Well, one North-South pair bid a slam and the other only a game, but the pair in the slam had underbid, while the pair in game were too high!

Try the West hand as an opening lead problem against two different auctions:

♠A 10 9 5 3 ♥J 9 5 ♦6 3 ♣J 10 9

First, the French bidding:

South	West	North	East
1♣	No	1♦	No
1♥	No	1♠	No
1NT	No	4NT	No
6NT	No	No	No

One club in the French style might be a three-card suit, one spade was fourth suit forcing, 1NT showed 12-14 balanced, 4NT was natural and invitational. Make your choice.

Now the British bidding:

South	West	North	East
1NT	No	3NT	No
No	No		

1NT was 12-14, 3NT was to play.

I'm sure you've guessed the situation by now. This was the full deal (see top of next column).

The British West, who had heard South indicate a spade stopper by his bid of 1NT, did not fancy leading a spade to establish South's king. He had an attractive alternative in the jack of clubs, which looked very unlikely to cost a trick, so that was the card he chose. Four heart tricks, five diamond tricks and four club tricks later, the French declarer had an overtrick in his small slam.

North
♠Q 4
♥A K 6
♦A J 9 4 2
♣K 7 2

West
♠A 10 9 5 3
♥J 9 5
♦6 3
♣J 10 9

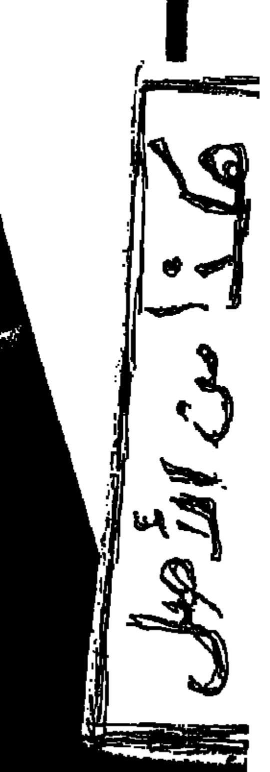
East
♠K 8 6 2
♥10 4 3
♦8 7 5
♣8 4 3

South
♠J 7
♥Q 8 7 2
♦K Q 10
♣A Q 6 5

At the other table, of course, the West player had no reason to look further than fourth highest of his longest and strongest suit against 3NT. Five spade tricks later, the French defenders had beaten 3NT by one trick for a huge swing of 17 IMPs.

It took a great deal of courage and skill to come back from this reversal and still win the match by the requisite margin, and the 1994 British team showed just those qualities.

Good luck to David Bakhshi, Mark Bratley, Danny Davies, Martin Jones, Simon Pollock and Tom Townsend who will be in Cardiff trying to repeat the 1994 performance.



Sports Diary Shiv Sharma

Doohan celebrates centenary in style

AUSTRALIAN motorcyclist Michael Doohan tightened his grip on a third world 500cc title with a scintillating display in the British Grand Prix at Donington Park on Sunday. The 31-year-old Doohan had a poor start, slipping from pole position to fifth place but quickly recovered, taking the lead from Loris Capirossi of Italy on lap 8 with a slick piece of overtaking and then pulling away.

He finished 3.31 seconds clear of his Team Repsol Honda team-mate Alex Criville, who lies second in the championship table, 62 points behind the Australian. It was Doohan's 32nd win in 100 GPs and his sixth this season.

"This is my 100th grand prix and I can't think of a better way to celebrate it," said the shaven-headed Doohan, who cut off his hair for charity a couple of days earlier. "I am enjoying my racing; I have achieved what I wanted by winning two world titles, now I go out there and enjoy things. That is why I have a smile on my face."

JASON GALLIAN earned himself a niche in Lancashire's cricketing history last week when he hammered 312 against Derbyshire in the county championship at Old Trafford, which has been staging matches since 1857. This took him past the unbeaten 300 by Lancashire's Frank Watson against Surrey in 1928 and the all-time ground record of 311 by Australia's Bobby Simpson against England in the 1964 Ashes series. It was the tenth championship triple century since the war and the first since West Indian Brian Lara's 501 two years ago.



Gallian . . . records galore

Meanwhile Dermot Reeve, Warwickshire's inspirational and innovative captain, has been forced to retire on medical grounds. Reeve, the 33-year-old former England all-rounder, had already been ruled out for the rest of the season with a hip complaint but the injury proved to be more serious than he feared. He has no immediate plans but hopes to stay in the game in some capacity. Reeve said: "Coaching would appeal to me, but I also enjoy media work."

Durham's Simon Brown has been called up by England for the first Test against Pakistan beginning at Lord's this week. The 27-year-old left-arm paceman is the leading wicket-taker in the country this season, with 56 victims. The full England squad is: Atherton, Stewart, Hussain, Thorpe, Hick, Ealham, Russell, Lewis, Cork, Mullally, Salisbury, Knight and Brown.

AFTER weeks of negotiations, Manchester United have finally succeeded in signing Czech midfielder Karel Poborsky in a £3.5 million deal with his club Slavia Prague. The 24-year-old will have a medical this week and, if all goes well, United will then start the race to get their Czech signing a work permit before the Charity Shield match on August 11.

United are also reported to have approached the Chilean club, Universidad Catolica de Santiago, with a £3.75 million offer for their striker, Sebastian Rozental.

Earlier, the club's attempt to lure Alan Shearer away from Blackburn Rovers met with an unusual retort — Blackburn bid £4 million for Eric Cantona. United saw red and assistant secretary Ken Ramsden responded: "There is no way the matter will be considered. The offer has been rejected out of hand. Eric will not be going to Blackburn Rovers or anywhere else."

WILL CARLING, former England Rugby Union captain, has been dropped from the England squad for the first time since his international debut eight years ago. The decision to leave out Carling, who has 66 caps, is being interpreted in some circles as the first tentative move towards easing him out of the international scene.

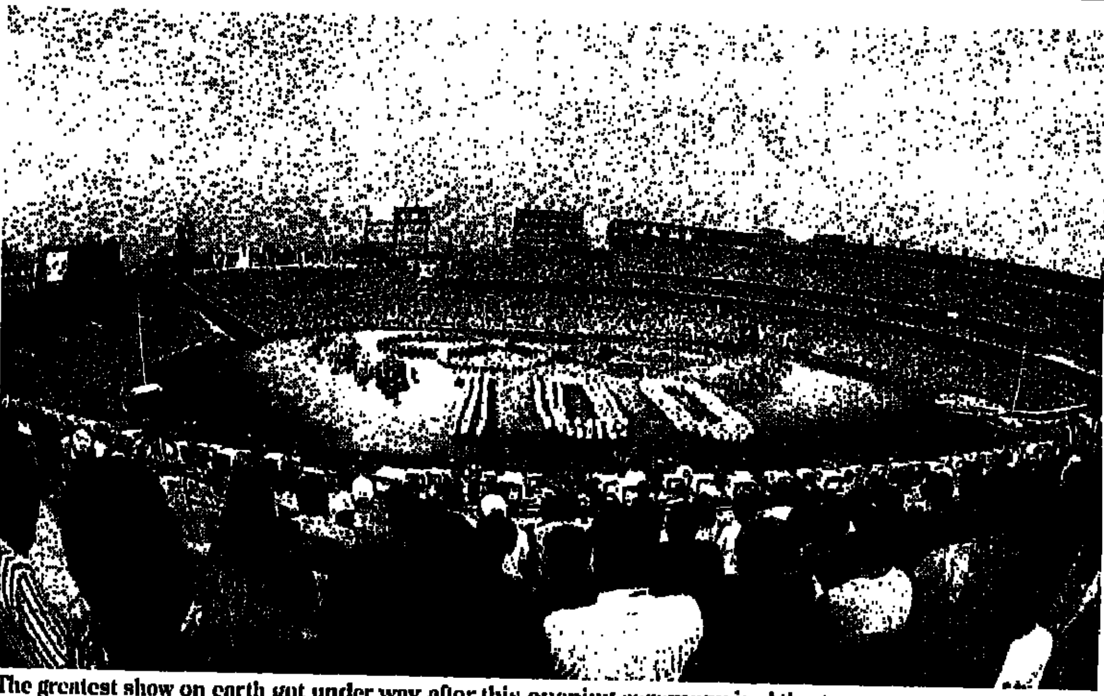
His midfield partner, Jeremy Guscott, and the veterans Rory Underwood and Dean Richards, all members of last season's championship-winning side, have also been left out of the 43-man squad chosen to attend a pre-season training session. Carling said: "I am keeping my head down and I will play and see what happens when the first squad into the season is announced."

SKY Television is likely to screen Premiership matches on a pay-per-view basis by next year, according to Doug Ellis, the Aston Villa chairman. He forecast that the Rupert Murdoch-owned station would show 10 games each week from the beginning of the 1997-98 season and that viewers would be charged up to £13.99 for some matches. Soccer officials said the claim was "pure speculation".

JOCKEY Richard Davis died in hospital after a fall at a Southwell jumps meeting. He was injured when his mount, Mr Sox, fell at the first fence in the Fisherton Novices Handicap Chase. Davis, aged 26, still in the early stages of his career as a jump jockey, was crushed by the horse as it rolled over.

THE world of cricket was mourning the death of Alan McGilvray, Australia's celebrated commentator, who has died, aged 85.

Olympic Games



The greatest show on earth got under way after this opening ceremony in Atlanta PHOTO: TONY MARSHALL

Big bucks and fizz get them marching through Georgia

Richard Williams

HUMAN butterflies, paper doves, a fleet of silver pick-up trucks, giant orchestras, choirs, marching bands, divas and a shadowplay of giant Greek warriors featured in last week's three-hour opening ceremony for the Olympic Games in Atlanta, Georgia.

From a recording of Martin Luther King's I Have A Dream speech, to the singer Celine Dion performing The Power Of The Dream, the ceremony was designed as a joint celebration of the South and the centenary of the Games.

For perhaps the only time in the whole of the most commerce-driven tournament in the history of sport, the sponsors kept their heads down as singers, speakers, actors and dancers projected themes of purity and unity.

An audience of 83,000 in the new $200 million Olympic Stadium was joined by an estimated 3.5 billion television viewers around the world as President Clinton opened the 1996 Olympic Games. His brief address followed the entry of the athletes of 197 countries. The triple gold medal-winning oarsman Steve Redgrave carried the Union flag at the head of the Great Britain team, as he did in Barcelona.

Deterred by the late hour, temperatures in the mid-90s and the likelihood of traffic gridlocks, many athletes gave the ceremony a miss. Teresa Edwards, a member of the US women's basketball team, was selected to represent all 10,361 of them by reciting the Olympic oath, promising on their behalf to compete "in the true spirit of sportsmanship, for the glory of sport and the honour of our teams".

The soul singer Gladys Knight was invited to sing Georgia On My Mind. Jessye Norman — a native of Augusta, Georgia — delivered Citius, Altius, Fortius, an anthem written around the Olympic slogan. The Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, under the baton of the Oscar-winning film composer John Williams, played Summon The Heroes, an instrumental theme for the Games. A hundred percussionists on five mobile stages performed music co-written by the Grateful Dead's drummer, Mickey Hart, and the composer Philip Glass.

The appearance of Muhammed Ali, now 54 and quivering helplessly from Parkinson's syndrome, brought a flood of conflicting emotions upon the gathering.

The Olympic torch was carried up to the Olympic cauldron at one minute after midnight, at the end of a journey which began in Olympia on March 30. About 10,000 runners carried it on its 15,000-mile relay across America, along a route plastered with the Coca-Cola logo.

As the Games got under way, Michelle Smith, a 26-year-old from Rathcoole in County Dublin, sent Ireland into raptures when she won her country's first gold in women's swimming — indeed the first Olympic swimming medal of any kind by an Irishwoman — by winning the 400-metre individual medley in 4 minutes 39.18 seconds.

Then, amid a protest on technical grounds from the American team, she swam to another gold in the 400m freestyle with the fastest time in the world this year, 4 min 7.25 sec.

Penny Heyns gave South Africa their first Olympic gold since 1952 when she won the 100m breaststroke on Sunday. Earlier, in the heats, she set a world record of 1 min 7.02 sec.

Atlanta is told to sort out the chaos

John Duncan, Chris Dodd and Stephen Bierley

THE International Olympic Committee has ordered the Games organisers to solve the transport and computer fiascos which marred the first three days in Atlanta.

"The message we gave them is: 'You've got to fix the transport'," said Dick Pound, an IOC vice-president.

If overcrowded or non-arriving buses and gridlocked traffic have caused anger and chaos among competitors and spectators alike, the glitches in the official computerised results system have embarrassed IBM, a corporate sponsor of the Olympics.

Sunday had started with an angry blast from the British rower Steven Redgrave, who sounded as if he wanted to throw the "diabolical" Games organisers bodily into Lake Lanier, where he and Matthew Pinsent had made a smooth enough start to their coxless pairs campaign. An easy heats win earned the Britons an automatic berth in Thursday's semi-final.

To judge from the general level of aggravation back in Atlanta itself and the faulty logistics that had forced an injured judo fighter to wait an hour for an ambulance, there would have been no shortage of volunteers to help him.

Part of the irate Redgrave's problem, with the heat and humidity that belied their heat's 9.10am start, was that a British Olympic Association car had to take them the 55 miles from the Village in Atlanta so that they would not be snarled up in the transport problems that have already beset these Olympics.

Redgrave later backed up his harsh words on the Games' organisation with action when he and other British rowers walked out of the Village and booked into a hotel in the city.

In other incidents, the lights went out on the Dream Team in the Georgia Dome basketball arena for 10 minutes and the official results service took two hours to notice the first world record of the Games.

The organising body, ACOG, admitted transport plans had not worked as hoped.